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THE

COUNTRY HOUSE ON THE RHINE.

BY

BERTHOLD AUERBACH.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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THE COUNTRY HOUSE ON THE RHINE.

BOOK VI.

CHAPTER I.

LIKE a sovereign returning to his castle where a revolt had recently broken out, Herr Sonnenkamp returned to his villa. Every step in his house, every look at a servant, seemed to say, "I am here again, and with me order and authority. Eric confessed that he had been guilty of negligence, and Sonnenkamp seemed to take pleasure in humbling him. Sonnenkamp liked to rule over others. He wished people to be subject to him; and when he saw that this did not succeed, he left himself no rest till he had crushed his victim, and then he was ready to raise him again, for he was sure of his authority. This self-reliant captain-doctor had assumed a bearing which did not belong to him; now he was humbled, and had to be thankful for all kindness and friendliness. Sonnenkamp had little idea how readily Eric humbled himself, and the reason for it; he regarded his subjection as a triumph of his power, while Eric confessed that, captivated by Bella's graceful charms, he had lost that strict watchfulness which was his duty.

Sonnenkamp soon saw that the robbery was not of

much importance. With a certain malicious pleasure he said—"The rogues have stolen that jewel-hilted dagger: the point is poisoned—whoever is scratched by it is lost."

Eric could scarcely state that the dagger was already in the hands of the authorities, for a feeling of terror came over him; why should the man keep by him a poisoned dagger?

Prancken and the pastor soon made their appearance, and Sonnenkamp declared to them that he would present the gold and silver salvers to the church if they were ever recovered. Almost indignantly he added—"I will not have them in the house any more. You must consecrate them, pastor."

When Eric mentioned the deep effect the event had had upon Roland, Sonnenkamp said—"My most honoured captain! I don't deal in sentimentalities. Honestly confessed, I am glad that Roland should early become acquainted with the much-extolled lower classes, and should see that there is nothing in them but secret conspiracy against the wealthy, which only waits a fitting occasion to break forth, or rather, to break in."

Sonnenkamp was fresh and animated; it only annoyed him that there had been so much talk about the matter in the neighbourhood, and that so much precious time must be lost in courts of justice. Frau Ceres did not speak a word of the robbery; it almost seemed as if she knew nothing of it; she only seemed glad to find Roland so grown since they had left him. She told Eric she had seen a friend of his mother's at the baths, and that she was as charming as she was distinguished.

On the second evening after the return of Sonnen-

kamp and his family, Bella and Clodwig came to the Villa. Eric was pleased to welcome his friend, but he was shy towards Bella; she said to him softly, behind her fan—"We are come to screen you from this wild man; he shall see that you belong to us, and now leave all and come to us."

Eric could only thank her with a silent obeisance. Bella saw how timorously Clodwig stood by Sonnenkamp; the refined and graceful man had always a fresh sense of fear when brought in contact with Sonnenkamp's herculean frame. Bella helped him jestingly out of his embarrassment, and said—"Herr Sonnenkamp, you have seen a good deal of life—have you ever known thieves who openly confess they wish to steal?"

Sonnenkamp looked up. Bella exclaimed, laughing—"We are these thieves in broad daylight."

Turning to Clodwig, she continued—"Do you speak now, dear Clodwig."

Clodwig timidly alleged that he wished that Eric might come to them. Sonnenkamp's keen eye fell upon Bella; he raised the forefinger of his left hand; he longed to say to Bella, with a smiling menace—"I understand you," but he put his finger to his lips, and said—"I am glad our Herr Eric stands so high in your favour."

Eric was struck with the peculiar stress laid on the word "our;" and then Sonnenkamp held out his hand to him, and said—"You will remain with us, will you not?"

Eric assented. Clodwig then proceeded with great assiduity to mention his visit to Eric's mother. He was evidently anxious to show Herr Sonnenkamp that a man of Eric's rank and position was not to be

humbled on account of an act of negligence. Sonnenkamp whistled inaudibly; a plan seemed maturing within his mind. So Clodwig also esteemed the Professor's widow highly? Well, the man should be surprised. The Professor's widow should visit Villa Eden, and the result would show itself; Clodwig and the widow should help him, without knowing it, to enter for ever into the society of the upper classes.

A plan, long ago cherished and pursued with quiet persistency, had been furthered during their summer journey. The wife of the privy counsellor, whose acquaintance they had made at the baths, had asked him the plain question why he did not have himself raised to rank; she had represented to him that a patent of nobility was very easy to obtain, especially if her husband's interest could be secured, as he was a confidant of the Prince. Sonnenkamp did not wish to ask for the distinction, but he wished that it should be offered to him. And to this purpose this new connexion should be applied. Bella again contrived to be alone with Eric for a short time, and she told him how delighted she was that for once she had succeeded in an intrigue—that she had known that Herr Sonnenkamp would not let Eric go, but she had also known that he would humble him on account of his negligence, and that for this reason she had induced Clodwig to come over at once.

"Did you remark a look of Herr Sonnenkamp's?" she asked in a whisper. "This man fancies that our friendship is something more than friendship; you will therefore not misunderstand me if I occasionally neglect you intentionally before the eyes of this man."

The news was brought that the groom whom Sonnenkamp had dismissed shortly before his departure,

on account of his having considered him to be a spy of Prancken's, had been arrested in the capital, just as he was offering a large silver salver for sale to a broker. Roland brought the news to Eric, and thus they might expect any hour to be interrupted by the impending investigation.

How was all instruction to fare in the midst of this distraction of mind? What could now remain fixed on the memory? Eric thought of proposing a good day's hunting with Roland; it would be good for him to divert his mind, and gain new energy and freshness, by turning his attention to other things. But he determined on just the opposite course; not diversion, but deep study, would be helpful to Roland. He was glad, therefore, when Roland said—"We will forget everything else, and go on working quietly."

The youth had gained a desire for learning, and this made him find his greatest pleasure in study, and Eric also was conscious of fresh animation; it was the animation of one who was rescuing a human being—of one who was rescuing himself. When he thought on the days at Wolfsgarten, on his playing and trifling with all that fills the human heart, he was frightened. He had wantonly squandered all that he had gained by assiduous work; he had allowed himself to trifle with Bella—with Clodwig's wife—and had veiled his trifling under the expression of grand thoughts—or, as he might even call it, his flirtation; he appeared in his own eyes as one guilty of sacrilege, and small, infinitely small, compared to it was the crime of those poor men.

The peace which he could only with difficulty have obtained for himself, and perhaps not at all, was now acquired by duty to another; he gave his whole mind

to study, and everything seemed more transparent and clear. As a practised swimmer rejoices in the stormy waves, dives, rises again, and divides the flood with his vigorous arms, so Eric's thoughts were absorbed in study, and his heart rose joyfully as the great waves rolled on; and all his weak fear and his dismay vanished, and all conflict with himself ceased.

Scarcely had a fortnight passed, than the regular study was again interrupted. Frau Ceres, who was usually uninterested and silent, often mentioned that she had promised the privy counsellor's wife to take Roland to visit her.

A journey to the capital was now resolved upon. Eric was not invited to accompany them. They drove off in two carriages; in one there were Frau Ceres, Fräulein Perini, and Roland, in the other Sonnenkamp and Prancken. The riding horses were sent on before.

Prancken, in the first place, expressed his pleasure that Sonnenkamp shewed himself friendly to the Church; for, on his side, he had already been scheming that the higher clergy, who enjoyed some consideration at court, should take part in the execution of the plan. Prancken felt a slight pang of conscience that he should be using his own change of heart and his constant intercourse with the princes of the church as a kind of diplomacy, but he was still worldly and vain enough to let the inward enlightenment of which he secretly boasted, pass before the world, and especially before Sonnenkamp, as a stroke of policy. He was glad, he said, that they had become acquainted so easily with the Privy Counsellor's wife; external means had their influence upon the wife, and these must be used cautiously, if at all, in approaching the husband.

They passed by a pretty villa, all the shutters of which were closed, and Prancken pointed to it, and suggested that Herr Sonnenkamp should purchase this villa, in order to sell it at a trifling price to the Privy Counsellor's wife, who, he knew, had long entertained a wish for a possession of the kind. Sonnenkamp agreed with the proposal, so long as the goal was reached. Prancken added that this was one lever, but of course it did not include everything.

They were both alone, but strangely enough they never mentioned the scheme by name, until at length Sonnenkamp said that the wife of the Privy Counsellor had informed him that the wine merchant wished to be ennobled; and he added that he should like the honour to be awarded to him first, and indeed he felt he had a superior claim to it, though he was not going to marry his daughter to a dying nobleman, but to one who enjoyed the best of health.

Prancken smiled as if flattered, but replied that the precedence of the wine merchant—it could not be called pre-eminence—was rather beneficial; the elevation of the peerage was then a less unusual occurrence.

"It is harder for you than the wine merchant," he added, "for the prince of the church stayed at the wine merchant's on his last circuit. The wine merchant has the strong church party in his favour, while you, I might say *we*, have really no party at all. All the better, the victory is ours alone."

They reached the capital. The Privy Counsellor's wife was rejoiced to see them, and said to Prancken, whom she constantly addressed as the head of the party, how happy she was to gain a new friendship in a watering-place acquaintance. With considerable adroitness Prancken managed to introduce the fact

that Sonnenkamp was purchasing an adjacent villa, in order to part with it again at a moderate sum, if by so doing he could ensure friends of rank as neighbours.

The lady knew the house; it had belonged to friends some time ago, and she had been there occasionally on a visit. She extolled the lot of people who could settle on such an estate, and have pleasant neighbours; she said she had told her husband that it was a shame to the state, that a man like Herr Sonnenkamp should possess no orders.

Thus prepared, Prancken entered into his plan, and the Privy Counsellor's lady added that it could only be desired by society that a man of such importance as Herr Sonnenkamp should be admitted among the higher class. Sonnenkamp behaved very modestly and bashfully; a girl receiving an offer which she had expected, could not look down more shyly.

Sonnenkamp maintained that he could not ask for rank, that it must be offered to him; he could obtain rank either by solicitation or purchase from a foreign prince, but he placed essential importance on the fact that the prince of his new fatherland, and the society of his country should honour him, and friends ought to suggest this. He expressed his delight in the delicate manner in which the Privy Counsellor's wife handled the matter; but his expression said that it was nevertheless a new style. He moved his hands, as if he were stroking some delicate cat's skin.

"Are there vineyards at the Villa?" suddenly asked the Privy Counsellor's wife.

"Yes; so far as I know, three acres, and in the best position," replied Prancken.

He gave Sonnenkamp to understand that of course this was to be bought with the rest. Sonnenkamp

all at once lost his character of modesty and bashfulness; his money was now concerned, and here he was master. He was on the point of telling the lady that he would only enter into negociation on his own terms, that she was not to have the country house and vineyards until he had first had his patent of nobility, but he restrained himself from saying this before Prancken, and it did not moreover seem necessary to bring that forward now. They might carry on the matter for a time, and thus bind themselves. When it came to an issue, he was man enough not to let himself be bamboozled. A smile of certain victory overspread his features.

The Privy Counsellor entered. He greeted Sonnenkamp with formal politeness, and thanked him for the attentions he had shewn his wife at Vichy. They passed into a hall, in which Roland had remained with a son of the Privy Counsellor, a young cadet, and Roland, whose beauty attracted every eye, was soon the central point of the group. The Privy Counsellor said that it was a matter of universal commendation that a man so rich in learning as Herr Dournay, though of course somewhat eccentric, had been chosen as tutor. When Roland replied in answer to the questions put to him that he should like to be an officer, the Privy Counsellor advised that he should enter the military school as soon as possible.

Prancken whispered softly to the wife of the Privy Counsellor, that he thoroughly approved of Herr Sonnenkamp's measure that Roland should not enter until they were ennobled, for it would be a strange position for a boy to receive his rank while in the military school, as he would have to bear a good deal of raillery from his comrades.

The Privy Counsellor spoke of the re-building of the ruins, and of Sonnenkamp's skill in gardening, and mentioned that it was often the subject of praise with the highest authorities. Sonnenkamp requested permission to be allowed occasionally to send specimens of his produce to the royal table, especially bananas, which were just now thriving remarkably well; and Prancken adroitly remarked that Herr Sonnenkamp, during nine months in the year, could bring fresh grapes to table. The Privy Counsellor replied that such kindness would certainly be welcome; he himself however could say nothing in the matter. The knight marshall, who was indeed a cousin of Herr von Prancken, would of course accept Herr Sonnenkamp's proposal. Prancken took Herr Sonnenkamp with him to the knight marshal. Roland rode out with the cadet. Frau Ceres remained with her hostess, who appeared much surprised when Frau Ceres urged her to accept a coral band which she wore, and which the Privy Counsellor's wife had much admired.

The Privy Counsellor's wife was obliged to comply, but she begged Frau Ceres to let it be regarded as a token of secret and hearty friendship, a token of which no one else was aware. She asserted repeatedly that she had no selfish interest in what she did; but in her own mind she was convinced that Frau Ceres shared the place of winning her assistance by favours.

Frau Ceres looked at her with astonishment, she seemed to herself so terribly simple; this lady spoke of things which she did not even understand. When the hostess proposed a drive to some place of amusement, Prancken acceded at once, for it was of importance that Frau Ceres should be seen riding in an open carriage with the Privy Counsellor's wife, and Sonnen-

kamp and Prancken with the Privy Counsellor himself, to this place of amusement, where the most select company were assembled; people would then at once see the connexion of Sonnenkamp with himself and the Privy Counsellor.

During the drive, a thought occurred to the wife of the Privy Counsellor, a thought as good-natured as it was prudent, she would obtain an aide-de-camp, and help a poor woman. With a tone of pity she spoke of Eric's mother, who had sacrificed her position for a sort of ideal affection. The understanding between the hostess and Prancken had already gone so far, that she did nothing without his assent; a slight nod from Prancken shewed her that she might go further. She now called upon Herr Sonnenkamp to do something for Eric's mother, indeed if possible to receive her into his own house. Tante Claudine was also praised to the utmost extent.

The Privy Counsellor's wife saw plainly that intercourse with the Sonnenkamp family would be much more easily kept up, if the professor's widow and the aunt were there; to a certain extent her intercourse would be with them and not with this man; in fact, it was a matter of duty to remain on intimate terms with these honourable ladies, in order to lessen their dependent position, and this would be all very easy if they took the Villa, and of course there were some acres of vineyards belonging to it.

Thus motives were mingled together, and the mixture was good and enlivening. Sonnenkamp smiled pleasantly, but in his heart he was saying to himself: "This chain of nobles is linked even more strongly than a band of thieves, and they are a band of thieves themselves, for the poor nobles want to use me as a

stepping-stone." He agreed very politely with the Privy Counsellor's wife, but in his own mind he thought: "You have not yet got the country house."

The sound of military music was heard from a public garden, where the officers of the guard were having a summer fête, and scarcely had one band finished a piece, than another began on the other side. In the centre of the gardens the officers were sitting at a long table under a large tent; small tables were also placed under the trees, and from these were hung variegated lamps, and the élite of the capital with their wives and daughters were sauntering about in gay summer garments. It caused a sensation when Sonnenkamp's two carriages with their magnificent horses drove past. Prancken quickly arranged everything, and his party took their places at one of the best tables. Several eyeglasses were directed towards them; Prancken was soon with his comrades, shaking hands here and there, but he speedily again joined Sonnenkamp and his party. The Privy Counsellor's wife hung on Sonnenkamp's arm, and was very friendly; Prancken had Frau Ceres on his arm. Roland was with the cadet at the targets, where they were shooting, and he always hit the bull's eye.

Herr Sonnenkamp was introduced to the General, who promised, at Prancken's invitation, to visit him shortly. Prancken said he was bringing him a recruit, and he pointed to Roland.

Evening drew on, and the variegated lamps were lighted. Small cannons were fired, drums beat, hurras resounded, the prince had arrived as the guest of the officers of the guard. Both bands played "See the conquering hero comes," and all was full of life; happiest however of all was perhaps Sonnenkamp, for

he was introduced to the prince, who indeed only addressed to him a few insignificant words. But all the world had seen that he was talking with him, and had made him a polite bow of recognition. They returned to the capital highly satisfied; the gay lamps were shining, and the music still sounding in their memory.

On the following morning there was a notice in the paper, that on the previous evening the officers of the guard had had their annual fête on the Rudolph's höhe; that his highness Prince Leonhard had honoured the fête with his presence; and among the guests present, Herr Sonnenkamp, of Villa Eden, and his family were specially mentioned.

While Sonnenkamp's family were at the capital, Eric rode to Wolfsgarten. He had combated against all treacherous thoughts, and the one feeling that remained was that he was pledged to return the friendship which Bella had shown him, by opening her eyes to her husband's greatness. This he desired to do; and full of courage and freshness he rode off.

He found Clodwig alone. Bella had ridden out with a friend who was staying there. Clodwig was glad to be quite alone with Eric, for on former visits he had often left him to the boy, and had gone with Bella. He told him that the son of a friend who had lived in Naples, as Russian ambassador, was now on a visit to them in order to turn his serious attention to agriculture. The young prince had, like most of his rank, been in the vortex of Parisian society, but there was something noble in him at bottom, and he had a power of will which augured well for him. "The great fact," he continued, "of the Emperor of Russia having abolished serfdom, had produced great moral as well as economical results; gentlemen were now obliged as

landed proprietors, to become wise and active landlords.

"There is no aristocracy so desirous of civilization as the Russian," said Clodwig, "but unfortunately the men are eager and enthusiastic for a year or two, and then they become sluggish; they have much talent for imitation, but they have still to test how long it holds out, and whether they produce anything new. Perhaps the abolition of serfdom is a great moral turning point."

The two men were in the midst of their discussions as to the power of mind, and Clodwig was just stating how much it often pained him that rude force had more influence over the mind than a man liked to confess, when Bella entered. Her countenance glowed as she welcomed Eric, and the young man of elegant but somewhat wearied appearance, greeted Eric with great politeness; he was glad that Eric could speak French so freely, as he was himself rather awkward at German; and he added immediately that Eric's French origin was evident, for there was something in his pronunciation, impossible to any but a Frenchman.

After they had retired for a short time, they all met again in the garden room. Clodwig must have impressed on the Russian that he must take Eric for his model, for the young man said almost immediately, "it would give me great pleasure if you would let me learn something from you."

He said this with a certain tone of childlike submissiveness, and so trustfully, that Eric held out his hand to him, and replied, "I could also learn from you."

"Except whist, which I am told I play well, I do not think there is anything to be learned from me," answered the Russian, laughing.

When they went to walk in the garden, the prince

who had placed his arm in Eric's, asked if he knew Herr Weidmann, to whom Count Clodwig was desirous of sending him. Eric said that he had only seen him casually, but that he was a man held in general esteem.

"If you knew anyone like yourself," said the prince, pressing Eric's arm as he spoke; "if you knew a man who would be my companion and teacher, I could procure him a guarantee for his whole life, or . . . excuse the question . . . would you perhaps, yourself?"

Eric thanked him, but declined, strongly recommending, at the same time, Herr Knopf, who was already a tutor at Mattenheim. Bella joined them and Eric walked beside them with mingled feelings. He had so much reflected upon the way in which he could lead Bella back from that boundary line of friendship which had been such dangerous ground, and his pondering was now useless, his place was already filled. In his heart he was angry at Bella's confidential behaviour to the Russian, and a strange medley of feelings rose in his mind. Ought he to rejoice that he had discovered in her a coquette, now trifling with one and now with another? Or did Bella only act thus, in order that her intimate behaviour with himself might not appear striking, when she maintained the same demeanour towards others. The doctor came; he always struck a fresh key. He took a keen glance at Bella, Eric, and the Russian; to him it all seemed perfectly clear.

The doctor begged Eric to fasten his horse to the carriage, and to drive with him in the direction of the villa. When the two men were seated in the carriage the doctor whistled for a moment, and then said, "Countess Bella is a pretty woman, and a clever one, too; she likes her parrot, which can fly freely about the wood, and then return obediently to her shoulder."

"I think," interposed Eric, "that here in the country and in a limited circle, people talk a good deal of their neighbours. Does it not seem to you a narrowness or whatever else one may call it?"

The doctor saw that Eric was not inclined to enter upon the subject, but he replied, "The most fertile material is the genus man, and the most inexhaustible variety in this genus, is woman. I am speaking, however, more of myself, for I have found a new variety in this woman. You did not know Frau Bella before."

"Only casually," was Eric's reluctant reply.

"But I knew her. She made a marriage of expediency, as many others do, and I do not blame her for that. I think differently to most people. The countess is indeed modest of her talents, but she is proud of her heroism; she told the count, I know, before their engagement, that she was not great enough for him, not worthy of him. As regards intellectual matters, her modesty was sincere, though exaggerated in expression. She has talents, but no soul, she has nothing but condiments, and no solid fare. Morally, also, her confession was full of truth, for morality is only a convenience with her."

Eric looked up surprised, and the doctor continued:

"I mean the morality of the world, which only regards outward honour as essential, and only has this in view in any deviation from the straight path. To Count Clodwig, on the contrary, anything impure and ugly in nature is repugnant, and he would never be guilty of it though no human being knew of it."

The doctor paused, and Eric's heart quaked. Was the man going to hold up to him Clodwig's purity, in order to show him how unworthy the slightest feeling would be that could grieve or deceive such a man?

The doctor continued, "There can be no greater honour than to be Clodwig's friend. I do not like the aristocracy; in fact, I hate them, but in Count Clodwig there is a nobleness which perhaps can only be produced when it is fostered from generation to generation, and not smothered as it is in us bourgeois. In Clodwig there is a constant, equable kind of temperature, never a blazing flame, but always an agreeable warmth. Countess Bella, however, requires unrest, she cannot live without it. She is a true dragon of virtue; every week, or at the least, every month, she entwines herself round some fair reputation, or still better, cat-like, she tears some guilty victim to pieces; like some well-trained sporting dog, she attacks the eyes of a poor little hare, then she is satisfied, and extremely complaisant, and does no harm to any one. She speaks very well of this one and that, so long as it fares ill with them; when people are humbled she gladly vouchsafes them her favour; as soon as a man is ill she is humanely kind to him, but so long as he is well, he has only harshness to expect from her. Her own beautiful and abundant hair is not a source of so much delight to her, as to be able to say, this or that person has so many pounds of false hair. She is glad when she can say this or that woman is scrofulous —for the Pranckens alone are healthy people. And when she asserts anything, she never departs from it; she would rather that her husband, that the whole world were illogical than that she should be wrong; wrong would be impossible for Bella von Wolfsgarten. She has never worn an unsuitable dress, never said a word that might not be engraven on stone. And this she calls character! this she calls strength! The logic of the whole world on that point may go to the devil.

She is expert in conversational jugglery. Have you ever received an elegant little note from her? She understands how to perform the art with the same supple grace on paper."

Eric put his hand to his brow, he could not conceive that he was hearing all this. The doctor threw away a half-smoked cigar, and continued—

"The evil world wishes (though unfortunately this cannot take place without piercing Clodwig to the heart) that this dragon of virtue should some day find its unsainted George; but this must be a man who likes to be popular with ladies, and not one to whom the words love, greatness of mind, and higher aspirations are serious terms, and who does not abuse them as a cover for other objects."

Eric knew not what he ought to say; he felt that he trembled. The doctor pulled a string, the drag locked the wheel of the carriage, and they drove down the hill-side, the carriage grating and hissing, and they looked down into the depths below, where a small stream was rushing away among the rocks. When they reached the valley, the doctor said—"When I said the evil world, that was not merely an empty expression. I must yet explain to you the new variety with which I have become acquainted in Frau Bella. There have been, and are many women who, in truth or in imagination, are thoroughly unhappy, or feel themselves thoroughly unhappy, because their husbands are so insignificant—and they themselves are so great, so little understood, and such ethereal beings—and their husbands delight in horses, and dogs, and so forth. The new variety, however, which Frau Bella represents is this—she is unhappy because her husband is so great. Had she one of those well-trained

automatons, which are there for the purpose of filling out a court uniform, she might be unhappy. She might regard herself as a fair, flower-adorned victim—she might patiently endure and bewail her lot, but the highest sentiments would be ever accruing. Now, however, linked with such a man, she becomes more and more hateful and contemptible; he offends her because he places her in the shade—in fact, because he often blames her half-uttered thoughts—though only by raising his brows. And truly—I believe she does not confess it herself—she hates her husband, for he turns her mere trifling into serious earnest, and compels her to acknowledge her impurities and follies. In return for this he is often severely punished. I understand now the legend of the Harpies. Modern Harpies foul every higher thought, making it unenjoyable and loathsome; and thus Clodwig has to struggle and wrestle for the simple daily bread of the mind. Do you know what, however, is the most dangerous thing in Frau Bella?"

"I know nothing more. I cannot imagine what climax you still have in view."

"A very simple one. In the church it is called the devil, but it appears now as a very smooth, noble, and self-sacrificing angel, and it comes and says, 'Look here, you are the friend of this woman; she has so much confidence in you, so much kindly feeling for you, make use of it now to give her the right tone of mind; you must teach her to honour her husband aright, and as he deserves to be honoured.' This sophistical angel seems to be so skilful, but he is in truth the most clumsy of all, for a woman never honoured her husband through the intervention of another. There is a last vital power, and a last power

She is expert in conversational jugglery. Have you ever received an elegant little note from her? She understands how to perform the art with the same supple grace on paper."

Eric put his hand to his brow, he could not conceive that he was hearing all this. The doctor threw away a half-smoked cigar, and continued—

"The evil world wishes (though unfortunately this cannot take place without piercing Clodwig to the heart) that this dragon of virtue should some day find its unsainted George; but this must be a man who likes to be popular with ladies, and not one to whom the words love, greatness of mind, and higher aspirations are serious terms, and who does not abuse them as a cover for other objects."

Eric knew not what he ought to say; he felt that he trembled. The doctor pulled a string, the drag locked the wheel of the carriage, and they drove down the hill-side, the carriage grating and hissing, and they looked down into the depths below, where a small stream was rushing away among the rocks. When they reached the valley, the doctor said—"When I said the evil world, that was not merely an empty expression. I must yet explain to you the new variety with which I have become acquainted in Frau Bella. There have been, and are many women who, in truth or in imagination, are thoroughly unhappy, or feel themselves thoroughly unhappy, because their husbands are so insignificant—and they themselves are so great, so little understood, and such ethereal beings—and their husbands delight in horses, and dogs, and so forth. The new variety, however, which Frau Bella represents is this—she is unhappy because her husband is so great. Had she one of those well-trained

automatons, which are there for the purpose of filling out a court uniform, she might be unhappy. She might regard herself as a fair, flower-adorned victim—she might patiently endure and bewail her lot, but the highest sentiments would be ever accruing. Now, however, linked with such a man, she becomes more and more hateful and contemptible; he offends her because he places her in the shade—in fact, because he often blames her half-uttered thoughts—though only by raising his brows. And truly—I believe she does not confess it herself—she hates her husband, for he turns her mere trifling into serious earnest, and compels her to acknowledge her impurities and follies. In return for this he is often severely punished. I understand now the legend of the Harpies. Modern Harpies foul every higher thought, making it unenjoyable and loathsome; and thus Clodwig has to struggle and wrestle for the simple daily bread of the mind. Do you know what, however, is the most dangerous thing in Frau Bella?"

"I know nothing more. I cannot imagine what climax you still have in view."

"A very simple one. In the church it is called the devil, but it appears now as a very smooth, noble, and self-sacrificing angel, and it comes and says, 'Look here, you are the friend of this woman; she has so much confidence in you, so much kindly feeling for you, make use of it now to give her the right tone of mind; you must teach her to honour her husband aright, and as he deserves to be honoured.' This sophistical angel seems to be so skilful, but he is in truth the most clumsy of all, for a woman never honoured her husband through the intervention of another. There is a last vital power, and a last power

of love, and this can only come from the man himself, and where it does not exist, it were no avail to speak, even with angels' tongues. The ancients extolled it as the greatest heroic deed of Theseus, that he overcame the Medusa, the emblem of poisonous beauty. In old times she changed men to stone, in modern times she effeminates them. I have a special hatred of Frau Bella, and do you know why? She makes a hypocrite of me whenever I go to Wolfsgarten; I ought not to be as courteous as I am to her, and it is no excuse that I am so out of love for Count Clodwig. No one has made me so bad as she has; with her I am a hypocrite, and am conscious of a feeling of fury that I could scarcely have believed. One great trait in her character is thanklessness. Do what you will, she is always thankless. If you want to see the direct opposite to Bella, look at the Major, who is thankful for everything, even for the air he breathes. The Major, old child as he is, has no belief in low human nature; if the devil himself were to come to him, he would find out the good in him. Bella is unprincipled. A man of a bad disposition has always some powers and energies for the world in which he lives; a woman of a bad disposition is wholly and entirely bad. Do you know anyone who matches Frau Bella?"

"I know nothing at all!" exclaimed Eric in desperation: it seemed to him as if he were fascinated.

"The only man who is a match for her, who could humble and master this whole menagerie, which may be called Bella, would be Herr Sonnenkamp, and in secret they have a profound sympathy for each other."

Eric felt relieved, and inclined to laugh; but the doctor resumed—

"Young friend, I am a heretic, I think; but a man

can never be so bad as a woman, nor even so hypocritical."

Eric sat silently, leaving the doctor to talk on, and when they had reached the end of their drive, the doctor alighted, and whistled to himself; his whole face was glowing.

"I have lightened my conscience," he said; "it has long been choking me to say it. Thank you for having listened so patiently. Young friend," and he laid his hand trustingly on Eric's shoulder, "if I have said too much of Frau Bella—it is possible—I beg you to retain all that is true, without any exaggeration."

Eric held his horse's bridle, but he did not mount; he walked silently and thoughtfully away; he was sorry that so much had been said about Bella, and that he had not defended her better. His thoughts turned to Roland, and a voice said within him, "I, too, was vain; I liked to shine and to be praised by a beautiful woman, and to feel the light touch of her warm glove. That was not a man who could say, 'I will educate a fellow-creature in purity.'"

His mind felt relieved as he went on his way and reached the villa. A telegram was there, announcing that the family would spend the night at the capital. Eric was alone.

On the following day Frau Ceres expressed her unwillingness to return so immediately to the Villa; the fête at Rudolphshöhe was still fresh in her memory, and she wished to repeat it, and not yet take her leave. But it was impossible to comply with her desire. She begged the Privy Counsellor's wife to return with her to the villa, and stay with her. The invitation was refused, but a speedy visit was promised.

Frau Ceres was out of humour; in order to cheer her, Sonnenkamp begged Prancken to travel in her carriage, and he took Roland to himself. Alone with his son, he asked him a great many questions; and he did not disdain especially to inquire how Eric had behaved with Countess Bella, and if they had often gone out walking alone?

Roland confessed that he delighted in entering into the life of poor struggling men, and Sonnenkamp gave an inaudible whistle. But the more Roland talked, the more his father was astonished at his intelligence and quickness; and the conversation at the castle, after the gamekeeper's examination, came out with strange complexity and confusion. Sonnenkamp struggled with himself as to what he ought to do. To dismiss Eric at once was unfeasible, on account of Roland; for he would then maintain with all the more obstinacy these perverted opinions. And a breach with Eric was not to be thought of, on account of the Privy Counsellor's wife, especially as she had placed great importance on obtaining the assistance of Eric's mother; above all, however, Clodwig was to be taken into consideration; for it was not Prancken, but Eric, who had brought about this intimacy, and Clodwig was one of the mightiest levers in the execution of his plan.

As soon as the first greetings were over, Sonnenkamp asked Eric where he had been yesterday; he asked the question as a master who has a right to dispose of his servant's time, and can demand account of it. Eric informed him of his visit to Wolfsgarten, and dwelt especially on the description of the young Russian prince. Sonnenkamp smiled; he enjoyed seeing how this proud idealist could so well conceal

his erring ways. Roland was now little inclined to submit to the established order, and when he remained at his lessons, he looked indolent; in the distance he seemed still hearing the music of the drums, and seeing officers enjoying their merry intercourse.

Eric saw the change in his pupil and was grieved; if he devoted all his powers to Roland, the boy manifested nothing but disgust. An insignificant circumstance brought the disunion to an issue. Sonnenkamp gave Eric in Roland's presence his first salary which had become due; he looked triumphantly at his son, as he was rolling up the gold coins. Eric took the money, walked a step forward towards the window where Roland was standing, and said: "Here, Roland, take my wages and carry them to my room. Wait there for me."

Roland took the money; he cast a confused glance on his father and Eric. "Do my small service and carry the money to my room," repeated Eric. Roland went. He carried the money in his hand, as if it were a heavy chain; he went to Eric's room and he laid it down on the table. He was on the point of going away when it occurred to him that he ought to guard it; he was just about to lock up the room, when he remembered that Eric had told him to wait for him.

Presently Prancken came to bid him good bye; he congratulated him that he would soon be rid of Eric. Now for the first time Roland saw clearly what had happened and was going to happen. Prancken bid Roland a merry good bye. When he was gone, Roland felt that he could never like Prancken again; he felt it as a loss, and stood quietly beside the table, looking at the money. Presently in a childish manner he counted how much Eric had received. But for wha

time had he received it? He could not make it out, and he turned angrily away and looked out of the window. Behind him lay the money on the table, and it seemed to him as if some one were beside him, whispering to him: "Forget me not!" Meanwhile Eric was standing by the side of Sonnenkamp, looking at him silently. Did the man intend to dismiss him or only to humble him. He was resolved to baffle both. As Eric still did not speak, but calmly kept his eye fixed on Sonnenkamp, the latter said at length: "I have not wounded you?"

"I am not sensitive, I esteem money as far as it deserves esteem, and I take pleasure in justice. I love your son perhaps more than...yet there is no measure for love, it cannot be measured by another. Because I love your son, I would rather that a taint rested on myself than on his father."

"On me?"

"Yes; I could have paid you back something, when you thus discharged your debt to me in the presence of my pupil. I cannot imagine that you did it without intention. But I declare to you, I do not feel myself humbled by your conduct."

Sonnenkamp made a defensive movement with his hand, and Eric continued: "I could have told you in Roland's presence that free labour—I am not speaking of love—such as man renders to man, can never be paid for. I repressed it, because I wish your son to love and honour you more than others, more than he does me. I am in your service, this is your house, you can dismiss me from it this very hour."

"I had no intention of doing so—I have no wish to do so! Have I said so? I must only explain myself to you and you must explain yourself to me. Have

you not told Roland that the time will come, or now is, when private possession is at an end?"

Eric replied that this had never in the remotest degree entered his mind; he had only chosen an instance of the change of opinion; he repented having chosen this one and would take care to set right Roland's mistaken conception. But he added that he should have supposed the father would rather have assumed that it was a misunderstanding on Roland's part than an absurdity on the part of his teacher. Sonnenkamp whistled again softly to himself.

"Let us sit down," he said at length, "let us speak calmly as reasonable men, as friends, if I may venture to say so."

He paused; then he continued in an altered tone: "I must observe to you that, apart from all error, your mode of thought seems to me dangerous for my son. You seem to me, in fact, a philanthropist. I respect it. You belong to those beings who like to express their thanks, even in a material form, to every street boy by the road-side for the service he has rendered you. You see, I believe in your true philanthropy. But this philanthropic feeling—I speak openly—is not fit for my son. A good deal of smuggling is transacted by feelings; we persuade ourselves that the lower se s share our sensibilities. My son will some day have a princely income; now, if a rich man is to go through life always looking out for distress, and for insufficient wages, he would be condemned to greater misery than a beggar by the wayside. The hardest thing which could happen to my son, would be, to make him sentimental and soft-hearted. I do not belong to this class of men, and I do not wish that my son should belong to those who have an unceasing

longing for unutterable, and as I believe, unattainable objects; I wish for myself and my son the attainable enjoyments of life."

"I also," replied Eric, "would like to keep Roland good-hearted, but not to make him soft-hearted. He must recognize the favourable circumstances of his life, he must receive the highest and noblest blessings, and yield them himself."

Eric explained more fully what he meant, and Sonnenkamp holding out his hand to him, said: "You are —you are—a noble fellow. You must educate me also. Forget what has happened; I trust you implicitly. I trust you, that you will not withdraw my son's heart from me, that you will not make him soft-hearted, and not a helper of the whole world."

Sonnenkamp uttered these words with vehemence, for in his heart he was furious that the man whom he intended to humble, should have thus boldly extricated himself. When Eric went to Roland, the boy approached him, held out both his hands, and exclaimed: "I beg you, forgive my father for having paid you like a servant."

Eric had a good deal of trouble in explaining to Roland what had happened, without confusing or disturbing his natural feeling; for the son ought to love and honour his father.

Sonnenkamp strolled about in the quiet evening. One expression, uttered this day by Eric, had produced a great struggle within him. That expression was: "Free labour." And again his thoughts reverted to the subject, and he could not conceive how he had happened to wound Eric, while it was his full intention to invite his mother to the villa. How kind would this be thought. What the world thinks is the one thing

of importance. The rouged woman knows that her cheeks are not red, but she delights in the idea that the world believes they are so, and she is merry and assumes youth. Sonnenkamp had wished that Prancken should manage the purchase of the neighbouring villa, which was to be ceded afterwards to the Privy Counsellor's wife. Prancken, however, had declined this kindly, but with good reasons, for he felt that Herr Sonnenkamp ought to appear as if only desirous of securing good neighbours. Sonnenkamp knew not whether to hope or fear that Prancken had suggested the matter for his own purposes and had secured some advantage to himself from it. Was he to be the deceived one? But it was a good thing if his future son-in-law had shrewdness enough to secure an advantage for himself.

For the next few days Sonnenkamp troubled himself but little about his house and garden or about Roland and Eric, he was inspecting the villa, endeavouring to obtain the vineyards that suited it, and becoming perfectly convinced that Prancken had done nothing in the matter. The wine count had also an intention of purchasing the villa; it was rumoured that he wanted it for his son-in-law, the son of the knight marshal. Sonnenkamp quickly concluded the bargain.

One day Roland announced that there was to be a great fête at Count Wolfsgarten's; "My father and mother," he added, "are delighted, and you and I are invited also."

Sonnenkamp was well satisfied with Prancken for having obtained this; and Eric's co-operation was no longer thought of. It was arranged with Prancken, that Clodwig, the most important member of the committee for bestowing orders, must be gained over in

favour of the matter now foremost in view, and indeed that he must be induced to take the initiative.

On the day of invitation Sonnenkamp had a hard struggle with Frau Ceres; she wanted to put on all her ornaments for this fête. Fräulein Perini had failed to make her give up doing so, although she had repeatedly asserted as an inviolable rule, that no one wore diamonds by daylight. Frau Ceres was angry like a little child, she would rather stay away if she were deprived of this pleasure.

Sonnenkamp begged her "out of pity" for the countess, whom they ought not to offend, not to put on her ornaments, for they would be worth twenty times as much as those of the countess; she ought to be simply dressed; on the other hand he promised her that at the next fête which they should give at home, she should put them all on. Frau Ceres, however, persisted in saying that she should not go unless she might wear her jewellery.

"Well," said Sonnenkamp, "then I will at once despatch a messenger to Wolfsgarten to say that we shall come without you."

He sent for a groom, and ordered him to saddle a horse as he had to ride immediately to Wolfsgarten. When Sonnenkamp had left, Frau Ceres looked after him with an angry glance; she was then to be the poor child, left alone at home, when all the rest went to the fête. After a time she ran through the house to Sonnenkamp's room and declared that she would go with them as they desired. Sonnenkamp expressed his regret that he had already despatched the messenger, and now Frau Ceres implored him to send a second messenger after him to announce her coming.

Sonnenkamp maintained that this was no longer pos-

sible; at last he yielded. He went himself to the stables and had nothing further to say to the groom than "Unsaddle again!" for he had not despatched him immediately, he knew that Frau Ceres, the spoilt child, would come round as she had done. They drove to Wolfsgarten.

Bella was extremely glad to welcome the Privy Counsellor's wife among her guests; she looked to-day more beautiful than ever. She contrived to shew attention to every one, and she was especially gracious to Eric. In his last visit she fancied she had seen a look of dissatisfaction in him, and she now wished to dissipate it by her tokens of preference. But it did not escape the eye of the crafty woman, that Eric received these attentions gratefully but coldly.

Sonnenkamp, who had a keen eye, held his breath like a hunter who comes across his game. Bravo! You know how to play your cards well, he thought. The virtuous reputation of this house had had something offensive for him; he now felt conscious of a certain sense of home in it. It was a small party, which had met together, and there was a rural freedom from form, but it was none the less well adjusted.

A famous musician who was staying in the neighbourhood, had been invited. He was resting himself after his tour of concerts at the country house of a colleague, who had married his pupil, a rich heiress, and had purchased a beautiful place in the neighbourhood. Besides Eric, Herr Sonnenkamp and the musician were the only bourgeois members of the company; the artist had been raised into the new atmosphere by his genius, and the rich man by his millions. The wine cavalier might already be regarded as ennobled, for it was well known that within the next few days, the

whole family would be raised to the peerage. The bridal pair had been invited, but on the very day of the fête a note had arrived, politely regretting that the bridegroom could not come, owing to a slight attack of illness. The bride also had therefore remained away.

Sonnenkamp was assigned the place of honour next Bella, and on the other side sat the prince. Clodwig had Frau Ceres beside him, and the Major was of course there, and had, as he desired, a place at the end of the table, where he could talk comfortably to the friends on either side of him. Clodwig conversed very agreeably with Frau Ceres, who from embarrassment ate a great deal without Sonnenkamp's persuasion. Sonnenkamp had sought out his old weapons of gallantry, which had never failed him; but to-day he seemed less successful, for Bella heard with only half attention, and was constantly listening to Eric's conversation with the Russian on the other side.

Suddenly all dialogue was hushed, for the Prince asked Herr Sonnenkamp: "Are the slaves in America also designated as souls?"

"I do not understand you."

"We in Russia designate the serfs as souls; it is said a man has so many hundred or thousand souls; are they also called so in America?"

"No."

"It is still a question there," interposed Clodwig, "whether negroes are actual human souls. Humboldt says that the savages are of opinion that apes could also speak, but that they desist intentionally from doing so, for fear they should be made to work."

A general laugh was audible, and Clodwig continued; "If we excavate the smallest vessel belonging to the age of the Greeks or Romans, we always find beauty in it.

As far as I know, the negroes have never fashioned a single beautiful new form."

"They have not," interposed the Prince, "as the saying is, even invented a new mousetrap."

"The question is," continued Clodwig, "whether the negroes can be heirs of civilization. As they are not heirs of beautiful human form, such as is transmitted to us from Egypt, Greece, and Rome, they also cannot be promoters of art, and art alone is the nobility of man; they cannot create beauty after their own image. Man creates his gods only after himself, and that is not possible to the negro. Perhaps in future times they may create something for themselves, but not for others, and hence they are disinherited, and do not stand in great and inviolable connexion with the rest of mankind."

Sonnenkamp looked up, his whole countenance became larger. This was the utterance of a man of the most undisputed humanity!

"It is so!" he interposed. "We are not sentimental in America. Our fixed and clear views on the subject were, it is true, treated as heresy by the wisdom of the schools, and were placed under the great ban of inhumanity; but there is a priestcraft of so-called humanity, and it has its inquisitions just the same as others."

Sonnenkamp spoke in a manner which plainly shewed how inapposite he found the subject which the Prince had introduced. Clodwig felt as if he ought to second the latter, and he began in a low tone, but as he went on, his voice grew more and more earnest.

"Whoever coolly and calmly considers historical facts, sees how ideas are constantly being developed, and how for a long time they work silently and undis-

turbed, and thus advance, until some unsuspected fact, which apparently has nothing in common with the idea, affords the opportunity for its realization and manifest development. Ideas are only preparatory, facts are decisive and dramatic."

Bella said something in a whisper to the Prince, who was sitting on her right. Clodwig plainly perceived that it was an apology for his heavy and general observation; his features contracted for a moment, and his thin lips were compressed, but he continued: "I am convinced the emancipation of the serfs would not have been effected without Sebastopol, and not in the same manner. The Crimean War was undertaken for the sake of humbling Russia, and it induced Russia to create a free peasantry, and to raise her own internal condition."

The Prince added a few words of assent, and Clodwig went on to say: "The Russian ambassador told me that during the Crimean War the report was suddenly spread—no one knew whence it came, but it was on every lip—that whoever was compelled to fight at Sebastopol, or who marched on voluntarily in order to rescue the Emperor from the allied forces, would after the war receive free land, and would become an independent peasant. It was in everyone's head. Whence was it? The idea of the emancipation of the peasants, which had long been discussed in books and journals, and in the higher circles of society, assumed a reality in the national mind, and became a fact which had only to be sealed by the imperial decree."

Clodwig paused as if weary, then recovering himself, he exclaimed: "It is only the fine old words: 'They shall beat their swords into plough shares.'"

No one knew what had led Clodwig to make such a

statement. Eric alone looked at him with a beaming countenance, when a hand suddenly touched his shoulder, and he turned startled round. Roland was standing behind him, and said: "You once said just the same thing yourself."

"Sit down and be quiet," said Eric.

Roland went to his seat, but he waited for Eric's eye again to meet his, and then he drank to him. Bella looked round supplicatingly; this was no conversation for a dinner-table; she looked at him, as if imploring him to turn the subject from such hateful things.

The servants were just taking round Johannisberg in pretty elegant glasses, and Eric, holding up his glass, said: "Count, the ancients never tasted such wine as this in the stone tankards we are now excavating."

Bella nodded to him encouragingly, and as he paused she said: "Do you know anything of the cultivation of the vine by the ancients?"

"Most probably," replied Eric, "the ancients had no idea of this aroma and fire of wine, for they only drank it in an unfermented state."

"I am far from wishing," interposed Sonnenkamp, "to assume to myself any learning, but it is very evident that without pruning the vines, no ripe and well-flavoured grapes can be obtained, and without casks no perfect wine can be manufactured."

"Without casks? Why a cask?" asked the Russian. "Do wooden casks then help to purify the wine?"

"I do not think so," replied Sonnenkamp, "but the cask allows air to penetrate, and thus the wine ripens in the cellar, and it can be drawn off, and in every way attain to perfection. The wine is smothered in earthen vessels, or at the most it only remains in its original condition."

With the utmost graciousness, Bella added: "I like the idea of that, I see now that advancing civilization increases the enjoyment of the productions of nature."

Sonnenkamp felt himself elevated; he was appearing in the most advantageous light. The conversation now ceased to be general. All were cheerful and pleasant, everything painful seemed forgotten, and faces glowed and eyes sparkled as they rose from the table.

The gentlemen sat in the garden alone over their coffee, the ladies had retired. The Prince, who wished to show himself friendly to Sonnenkamp, expressed his intention of visiting America, and Clodwig strengthened him in it. He regretted that he had neglected to do so in his youth, and added: "I think any one who has not been in America, does not know what man is when he is let alone; life there awakens new energies of mind."

"Allow me one question, Count," said Eric. "It is striking that in America no new names are devised; those of the aborigines are still in use for rivers, mountains, cities, and tribes, and in addition to these there are only names taken from the old world. I should like to ask, has the new world as yet been able to add anything new to the old moral laws, or to deduce anything new from them?"

"Certainly," interposed Sonnenkamp, "the best, there is."

"The best? What is that?"

"It is, help thyself."

Clodwig shook his head and said: "Help thyself is, strictly taken, no real principle, it is an animal instinct. Every animal helps itself with all its power. This dogma is only just and reasonable, when employed against some false refinement of morality, some state of

decline which demands everything from the state. Help thyself! it is a good motto for an emigrant; but as soon as the emigrant has become a settler, he has a right to others and he has duties towards others. Help thyself may in extreme cases apply to individuals, but never to communities; the serfs could not help themselves, and slaves would not be able to help themselves: the moral law of fellowship is, help thy neighbour as thy neighbour helps thee, and if thou helpest thyself, help another too."

Again they had got upon the subject brought forward and happily averted at table; no one seemed desirous to take it up, but Clodwig continued: "It is as if every people had to take their place in the great world of history by the realization of one great idea; I believe that America is called to the completion of a great deed; to the universal annulling of slavery. Yet this is, as I have before said, the realization of an idea long before preparing; indeed, we may ask, has America a new moral principle?"

"Perhaps the sewing machine is a new moral principle," suggested Prancken impudently.

They all laughed.

"May I too ask something?" said Roland softly.

"Ask it, that's right," said Eric encouragingly.

"When I heard the count speaking of heirs of civilization, I wanted to ask how do we know that we stand in the ranks of civilization?"

The youth spoke timidly, Eric encouraged him, and Roland continued: "Perhaps the Turks or Chinese regard us as barbarians."

"You desire, therefore," said Eric, helping him, "some infallible token by which a people, an age, a

religion, or a man, may perceive whether they are in the current of the world's civilization?"

"Yes, I mean that."

"That is, indeed, hard to fix upon. But I think we might say we know that we are standing in the central point or, perhaps, rather in the advancing stream of civilization, because we are inheritors of the past, because we receive from Persians, Jews, Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans, and carry on what they have transmitted to us; Turks and Chinese who do not do this, or cannot do this, are separate and cease with themselves. It is no pride, if we Germans place ourselves in the first rank of civilization, for there is no people who are more ready to receive and carry on the work of others, than the Germans, or we might say, the Teutonic nation, for your own native land is included."

Clodwig's eye and that of Roland rested on Eric, then they looked at each other, and Clodwig grasped Roland's hand and held it fast.

For some time there was a general silence. The ladies sent to request the gentlemen to join them in the drawing-room. Sonnenkamp seized the favourable opportunity of being alone with Clodwig in a corner of the great drawing-room; he began at first by speaking of the kind interest which Clodwig took in Roland. He cautiously proceeded, and there was a touching patriarchal tone in the way in which he said that he had nothing more in life to desire for himself, and that it was now his one only wish to ensure for Roland a lasting and certain position of honour. Clodwig replied that he did not doubt that from Eric's intercourse and instruction he had already acquired, and would go on acquiring, opinions and

rules of conduct, which would give him a support in himself, and secure for him the society of noble men.

This expression, "the society of noble men," Sonnenkamp now used as his starting point. He had not in vain studied the natural history of bribery, Clodwig must be bribed to believe that he was to be taken into the committee, and that he was to receive ideal dividends. But Clodwig acted notwithstanding as if he did not understand what Sonnenkamp was aiming at, and this made him so confused that instead of asking Clodwig for his co-operation he requested his advice. Clodwig told him decidedly, and even somewhat sharply, that it was not good to enter into a decaying institution, in which after all he would never feel at ease. Sonnenkamp was obliged to thank him cordially. Clodwig seized the first suitable opportunity for mingling with the other guests.

It was broad daylight as they drove home, and the guests accompanied them a part of the way. Sonnenkamp made Roland sit with his mother and Fräulein Perini, he did not wish to expose himself again to the ill-humour of his wife, who had repeatedly stared at Bella's large pearl necklace; he took Eric with him in the carriage.

"So that is German society! Our host is an old Professor at the bottom," said Sonnenkamp.

After a time he praised Eric's tact for having kept his friendship for Clodwig and his beautiful wife so much in the background on account of Roland, who was still so young. Laying his hand on Eric's shoulder, he added: "Young man, I could envy you; I know well, you would deny everything, but I congratulate you. The old man is right: help thyself is no moral principle."

Eric could not repel the insinuation decidedly; he felt himself, however, bitterly punished for a passing error, although it had only been committed in thought.

Sonnenkamp was out of humour. He was now striving after a thing in which self-help was insufficient; he must allow himself to be helped by others. He wanted a position of distinguished honour. It is not like obtaining a possession, like gaining money and property; honour proceeds only from a community, others must help in its acquisition, and the first and the most distinguished of all, and one whose co-operation was needed, was stubborn and repelling.

CHAPTER II.

AGAIN and again came diversions which interrupted the course of education. Frau Ceres, however, was happy, for now came the opportunity of showing all her jewellery, and Fräulein Perini was delighted when she was able to open the box that arrived from Paris; there could be only two such dresses, and one was possessed by the emperor, the other by Frau Ceres.

After the entertainment at Wolfsgarten Sonnenkamp was generally acknowledged, and he soon received an invitation from the wine count to the festivities upon his daughter's marriage with the knight-marshal's son. Eric had a good deal of trouble to restrain his pupil from constantly talking of the fête, for Roland had heard of fireworks which were to be let off on the Rhine and on the wooded heights around. Every morning he said the same words, "If only the weather will remain fine." He often, too, drove out with Prancken, and returned excited after an absence of some hours; he evidently concealed something from Eric, and Eric avoided questioning him.

On the day of the fête the general also arrived, with whom they had become acquainted on their visit to the capital. A long train of carriages were drawn up before the villa of the wine count, a grand and stately building, standing on the highway, and with shady

and pleasant gardens on either side of it. The general gave his arm to Frau Ceres. They were shown into the garden by richly liveried servants; and the walks were arranged on both sides with beautiful and sweet-smelling flowers. As they went down the steps into the garden, the wine count stood there and begged the general to consign Frau Ceres to him. Various groups were strolling about the garden or sitting in beautiful situations.

Sonnenkamp was introduced to the bridal pair; the bridegroom looked very much fatigued, but the bride, on the contrary, with the wreath of roses in her hair, appeared extremely animated; they expressed their regret that Manna was not also at the fête. The knight-marshal *père* was delighted to meet Herr Sonnenkamp again here, and also to make the acquaintance of his wife and son, of whom he had heard so much. Frau Ceres was placed next the knight-marshal; for the present she wore her white mantle over her jewelled attire.

The wine count had three sons and three daughters; the eldest girl was already married to an officer of rank. One of the three sons had gone to America, and had been lost sight of; he had spent a great deal of his father's money; a second was a member of a theatrical orchestra, in a large town in central Germany, and it was said that he had written to his father that he, for his part, would not accept a title of rank. The third son, the wine cavalier, had been very eager about his father's elevation to rank, and was delighted at the prospect.

The wine count behaved himself with the greatest amiability, and there was an unusual elasticity in the whole manner of the slender, active, grey-haired old

gentleman; he went from guest to guest, and had a suitable word for each; he received congratulations from all, and, indeed, double congratulations, for on that very day the prince had ennobled him. He thanked them modestly; he might say that he could have obtained the dignity ten years ago, but at that time there was a certain patriotic fancy abroad, and even a travelling clerk had been infected by it. He constantly replied that the favour of his prince made him extremely happy. Sonnenkamp smiled in silence; he was thinking how soon they would be honouring him in the same manner, and he prepared himself to receive their congratulations with modest gratitude.

Frau Ceres was painfully embarrassed; she sat next the knight-marshal, who, when he found that he could carry on no conversation with her, allowed her to sit silently beside him. Happiness at length appeared for her also, for the wife of the privy counsellor arrived: she was extremely glad to meet her friend here, and the knight-marshal resigned to her his seat next Frau Ceres. Soon afterwards Bella came. Even in this circle, where there were many of her equals, she appeared distinguished from the rest. She was very gracious to Frau Ceres, and even begged her to take her arm, and go with her into the garden drawing-room, where the rich presents of the bride were exhibited. Exclamations of admiration were heard from those who had seen them, and looks of envy were also apparent. Frau Ceres was very awkward with her long train, while Bella held up hers gracefully with both her hands, and moved along as if she were floating amid clouds.

Sonnenkamp was warmly greeted by the Russian Prince Valerian, who held out his hand to him; Son-

nenkamp was delighted; but everything seemed suddenly strewn with ashes as the Russian Prince said—

"I have forgotten it; you must tell me still more accurately all you can about the manner of treating slaves; I am afraid I shall not meet you again, if I decide on my American journey."

He soon turned away as the General was introduced to him. Sonnenkamp felt himself rather new and forlorn in this circle; but his countenance brightened again when he saw Bella and Frau Ceres walking so confidentially together.

"You have scarcely spoken to the countess," he said to Eric.

"I was thinking of something else," replied Eric. "I should like to know how our new Baron here says to his servants—'John, Peter, Michael, from this day forth you are to address me my lord, or baron!' It must, after all, seem very ridiculous!"

"Perhaps Doctor is a finer title. Is it born with a man?" replied Sonnenkamp sharply.

At length the music in the garden ceased, and the night drew on. On the balcony of the house there appeared a mediæval-looking trumpeter, who gave forth a blast of trumpets, and the company repaired within doors, passing up the steps into the grand saloon and the adjoining rooms.

Two large arm-chairs, festooned with flowers, were here placed in front for the bridal pair, and behind them was a row of seats for the elderly and more distinguished members of the company.

Frau Ceres occupied a seat near Bella; and with great dexterity Fräulein Perini now made her way to her, and pulled her mantle. Frau Ceres understood, and all eyes, which had turned to the bridal pair, were

now directed to her. Such jewellery—a wreath of corn-ears, each grain of which was a large diamond—such a dress, trimmed over and over with pearls and diamonds—had never been seen before; a whisper passed through the assembly; it was long before it could be hushed. Frau Ceres stood by her chair as if fascinated, until Bella begged her to sit down. Smilingly she looked at Frau Ceres's rich ornaments. No matter! The American could put on these, but a neck and throat like her own, that she could not put on! It now seemed that the wall was a curtain, and as it drew up, vine-dressers and maidens appeared, singing and proclaiming the praises of the house.

The curtain fell; but it was soon drawn up again, and behind a thin gauze Apollo was to be seen, amid vine-dressers and shepherds—and Apollo was Roland. Twice was the curtain raised after it had fallen again, for all were delighted with the scene, especially with Roland's appearance. Bella nodded exultingly to Eric, who was standing at the side; but Eric saw her not, for he was asking himself how all this would affect Roland? It was not long before Roland joined the party in his ordinary attire; he was praised on all sides, and almost treated with affection. Frau Ceres was congratulated on having such a son, for he was really divinely beautiful; and repeated regrets were expressed that her daughter was not also present. Frau Ceres received it all very graciously, and said continually—"I thank you sincerely. You are very kind." Fräulein Perini had taught her the expression. Fresh apartments were thrown open; the tables were covered with refreshments, and they sat down. Roland sought out Eric. "And you alone say nothing to me?" he asked.

"You looked well, and kept quiet."

"Ah," continued Roland, "it has cost me great trouble to conceal anything from you, and still more effort to be attentive for the last few days; but I wanted to surprise you."

Prancken, who had arranged the *tableaux vivants*, was peculiarly excited during the evening, as it came into his head that he might have married the pretty daughter of the wine count; it is true the rank here was also but newly varnished, still everything here was transparent; she would now be a graceful widow, or, still better, an agreeable, unhappy wife. He dispelled the thought, and said to himself that he loved Manna.

As a former comrade of the bridegroom's, and as a friend of the family, Prancken gave the toast in honour of the bridal pair; he spoke well, and, what was best of all, humorously. A volley of small cannons announced that the fireworks were beginning. The guests repaired to the verandah and to the garden.

Before Eric remarked it, Bella was standing beside him.

"You are unusually grave to-day," she said, softly.

"I am not accustomed to noisy festivities."

"I fancied you had something to say to me," whispered Bella, still more softly.

Eric was silent, and Bella continued—"Do you also feel that when you see your most intimate friends in large parties, you seem to yourself as if you were in a foreign land, or as if you were struggling with a current, in which you were sinking?"

There was a sudden exclamation of general astonishment. A number of rockets had been let off, there was a sound of music, and a trumpet was answered by

an echo from the mountains on the other side. Far in the distance might be seen people from the towns and villages standing by the river's side, and their faces were radiant with the light.

"Ah!" exclaimed Bella, as it grew dark again, "after all we are all of us slaves! One ought to live like that, that would be life, like a rocket in the sky! Then let night and death come, they would be welcome!"

Eric trembled; he knew not how it was, but he was holding Bella's hand firmly grasped. The fireworks now rose from the river and the hills, and it seemed as if every one, even those by the riverside in the distance, must have seen Bella's hand in Eric's. Eric shrunk back. Presently the Prince passed, and Bella took his arm. Eric stood alone; he saw Bella leaning on the Prince's arm, and walking up and down the road in front of the house, and he began to reflect whether he had not told Bella that he loved her. It seemed to him as if he had spoken the words aloud, and yet it could not have been. Fire wheels, the entwined names of the bridal pair, and Roman candles, appeared one after another, and at length from a boat on the Rhine, there rose a great golden wine-bottle, which burst asunder in the air, and scattered stars of light like rain in sunshine. The music sounded, and from the river banks there came a burst of applause, as if the waves had suddenly found a voice. Eric's brain was in a whirl; he no longer knew where he was. Suddenly he felt an arm placed within his own. It was Clodwig. Eric felt himself unworthy to say a word, but in his own mind he vowed that a ball should pierce his heart before it should ever beat again with such emotion.

Clodwig spoke of Roland, and said that he thoroughly

disapproved of Roland being driven into a new sphere of life. Eric answered absently. Clodwig remarked that he believed Eric knew of the project, but Eric interpreted it as alluding to Roland's military profession, and all the while he was absent and inwardly trembling. Eric avoided taking leave of Bella.

It was late when they returned to the villa. The privy counsellor and his wife drove with them, and spent the night at Villa Eden. The privy counsellor's wife occupied the carriage with Sonnenkamp and Prancken; she informed them that Bella had confided to her that she was going in the next few days to invite Eric's mother and aunt to her house; Prancken behaved as if he had known this before, but in truth he was surprised. Now that they were alone, and had nothing to fear, the privy counsellor's wife asserted that no one could more easily and naturally incite the authorities to bestow the new dignity upon Herr Sonnenkamp, than the professor's widow could. It was not exactly settled, but the prerogative of hospitality was awarded to Herr Sonnenkamp, and he was to invite mother and aunt to Villa Eden.

Sonnenkamp smiled to himself, for he had a still more extended plan in which the professor's widow could be employed. The general had repeatedly mentioned that Eric's mother was an intimate friend of his sister who resided at the island convent as lady superior. It was a double hand which had now to be played.

CHAPTER III.

"WHAT should we be, if we had to stand with our innermost thoughts unveiled before the judgment seat?"

Eric had written this in his reply to an elegant note which he had received from Bella. And now, as she stood before his portrait, which she was about to finish, it seemed as if the picture itself were uttering the words. At this moment her whole life opened before her—the days of childhood—no fixed image of them remained. Her teachers had praised her for her quickness of comprehension. A French woman had been dismissed, and a strict English woman engaged. Bella learned languages fluently, and good manners seemed innate in her. Even as a child her witty repartee was admired, and she heard it repeated; this flattered her vanity, and early destroyed her ingenuousness.

She was confirmed, but the sacred service seemed to her only a token that she was now dismissed from the school-room, and that she might lay aside short dresses and wear long ones. When she went up to the Holy Communion, one thought filled her mind beyond all else, and this was of her own surpassing beauty.

Her father yielded to her desire, and in the next winter, though only fourteen years of age, Bella was introduced. She was a brilliant creature and was surrounded by admirers; everyone said that there was an

air of freshness about her which was enchanting. But a certain coldness early showed itself; she was called in ridicule the mermaid, and in her eye, if we may say so, there was a kind of cold fire.

Not yet sixteen years old, she had already refused many suitors for her hand. She heard smilingly of the engagements of one and another, for she could say to herself, that the possession might have been hers, had she willed it. On her seventeenth birthday, which was ushered in by a morning serenade from the band of the guard, the expression of Bella's large eyes might have been seen to change; for as she awoke at the sound of the music, a thought rose within her and never more left her: and this thought was, "I have no belief in love, all the songs and legends of the power of love are pure tradition!"

Not yet twenty years old, she withdrew, chilled and blunted, from society, after the year of mourning for her deceased mother was over; and only occasionally was she induced to enter it again, and then as a burdensome duty. She studied, drew, played, she conversed with artists, scholars, and statesmen, and at the same time there was something frigid in her manner and look, unless she were launching forth witticisms, which were all the more striking in their effect from the deep manly voice in which they were uttered, and which was contrasted so strongly with her general appearance.

It excited great sensation when it was rumoured that Bella had overcome the opposition of her father, who had refused to allow her younger sister to marry before her. Bella stood at the altar by her sister's side, and through her bridal veil she saw the dark, fiery eyes of the adjutant-general, recently

left a widower, fixed upon her. Her lips quivered. You will woo me in vain, she thought, and she took pleasure in her pride. To shatter, to destroy, to torture, to allure, and to reject—these were her delight. She had told her father, "I should like to marry if one can like anything which, after all, one will not do. But to go up to the altar and say yes for life and death! . . . I was frightened when I heard my sister say it, I felt as if I must call out No! no! no! And I cannot be sure that I should not involuntarily say no before the altar."

She offered herself as companion to a sick princess who was going to Madeira. The princess died, and Bella returned. She smiled when they told her that the adjutant-general was already married. She thought it but just that she gradually ceased to be the object of admiration, but still it vexed her. Again she travelled freely and independently with two Englishwomen, through Italy and Greece. Lutz, Sonnenkamp's present courier, had been her courier. She had passed a whole winter in Constantinople. The malicious tongues of the capital said at that time that she was in search of a man of position; what he was besides, was indifferent to her; she would marry a grey-bearded pacha. Bella returned home, and now always appeared in company attired in velvet.

Then Clodwig came forward as a suitor, and the engagement and wedding occupied a period of four weeks. Bella retired with her husband to Wolfsgarten; she was not altered by marriage—that completion which marriage gives to the female character, was denied to her. Clodwig had called himself a weary soul, and she called herself the same. Here in their well-situated

country house, with its prospect over the rich country round, they would find repose.

At first Bella felt herself humble and modest; life was now secluded and calm. The days passed uniformly by. Clodwig was attentive, sympathising, and full of devotion to her; repose and constancy were his prevailing characteristics. In all personal intercourse he was extremely considerate and tender; his impetuous feelings, which proclaimed themselves in passionate expressions, only appeared when he was conversing on general subjects, especially on political matters. Bella saw in this only a just excitement, for Clodwig had passed his whole life in a paralyzed age, and amid the petty circumstances of a pigmy state, while he seemed to have been created for greater and more world-agitating events.

Clodwig was full of admiration of his wife's talents. When, however, he occasionally blamed her, and tried to make her acknowledge her superficiality and incompleteness, her feelings rebelled; she had never heard the truth, she had only received homage. These pedantic reprimands, as she called them, wounded her, but she repressed the feeling. The world was not to see her unhappy for a moment; the deriders were not to have their triumph. And now a man had entered their circle against whom her feelings had rebelled, and she had expressed this openly to Clodwig. She had used all her influence to prevent his settling in the neighbourhood, but as Clodwig was always speaking with enthusiastic kindness of the man's nature, and indeed, against her will, had attracted him to himself, she had yielded to the agreeable feeling of animating intercourse. Throughout her life, Bella had never been a single hour dissatisfied with herself, she had never

repented an act committed, for she was always in the habit of saying to herself, "At the moment that I did it, I was of course authorised to do so."

Thus Bella stood before the still unfinished picture; she was annoyed with herself. She had been a match for the world, and now all at once she was the victim of an immature and insane emotion, for immature and insane she must call it, and she could not free herself from it. Was it because it wounded her self-reliance, that for the first time she had held out a hand, which had not been received? Her large eyes sparkled. She quietly left the atelier, and went into her dressing-room. There she stood before the large mirror, and loosened her luxuriant hair and gazed in the looking-glass, and on her compressed lips lay the question—Art thou then so old? She opened her lips like a feverish, fainting sufferer, who wishes to drink. Her eyes beamed with unearthly brilliancy, and she said to herself: Thou art beautiful, and thou art free enough to contemplate thyself as a stranger. But what means this immature and insane emotion? She took the long locks of hair in both her hands, and held them crossed under her chin; and for the first time she saw that she resembled the bust of the Medusa in the bow-windowed room above. Wildly exulting, she turned her head from side to side.

"Yes, I will be Medusa! He shall be turned to stone, he shall be crushed and dashed in pieces! He shall kneel before me, and then I will trample him underfoot!"

She raised her foot, but quickly she clasped both her hands over her face, and tears gushed from her eyes.

She longed for some one to whom she could pour out

all her innermost feelings. She shuddered at being alone; she rang for her maid and ordered her to dress her.

"Tell me how old I am. Do you know?" she asked suddenly.

The maid started at the question; her answer was long in coming, and Bella continued—"I was never young."

"Oh my lady, you are still young and have never looked better than you do now."

"Do you think so?" said Bella, throwing her head back.

She stood at the window, looking out into the distance and then again at a tall ash tree, the branches of which the wind was pulling asunder and bending the stem to and fro. The tree bent towards the house, as if it must seek for help. Bella thought within herself, year after year this tree has rooted and flourished here, and no storm can tear it up and break its branches. Does he know that this storm will pass by and will only animate him afresh?

"Eric!" she said suddenly, aloud. At the same moment Clodwig entered, and said—

"Dear wife, I was looking for you."

It thrilled through Bella, as she heard herself called "dear wife." Clodwig showed her a letter to the professor's widow, in which he invited her at Bella's desire to spend some weeks with them at Wolfsgarten.

"Do not send the letter off," she said, avoiding Clodwig's eye as she spoke; "let us be alone again. I do not now wish for any disquietude through the Dournay family."

Clodwig replied that such a woman would not bring disquietude but delightful intercourse, and that they

should often in consequence be able to see Eric at their house. Bella was silent.

The storm had ceased; Bella opened the window and a fresh breeze blew in. She held the letter in her hand; storm, lightning, tempest, rain and thunder, had swept through her mind, and she now felt refreshed. She said to herself, that intercourse with this noble lady would restore her former self; in fact, for a moment, it passed through her mind that she would acknowledge all to Eric's mother and abide by her advice. But along with this thought, there came another, like a second melody, suggesting that this was not necessary; it would readily happen that Eric would come to Wolfsgarten, and intercourse with him would then return to its ordinary calm course. Bella wrote a few hasty lines at the end of her husband's letter. Just as she was concluding it the doctor came, and at Clodwig's desire he also added a few words.

The crackling of the fireworks was still buzzing in their ears, the wondrous lights were still glittering, and wind instruments were still sounding in their remembrance, when on the following morning the witnesses had to appear at the trial relating to the burglary. Prancken remained behind with the guests at the Villa; he had undertaken to show them the newly purchased country-house. Sonnenkamp, Roland, and Eric; besides the steward, the coachman, Bertram, the head gardener, "the Squirrel," and two under-gardeners, repaired to the garrison town, to attend the trial.

The president and judges entered and seated themselves on a platform. On the right sat the jury, on the left the witnesses and the accused; the hall was full of spectators, for all were curious to hear the mys-

terious Herr Sonnenkamp speak publicly, and who could tell what might be learned besides?

On the bench of the accused sat the dwarf Nicolas, the groom, and the gamekeeper. The dwarf blew his nose very zealously; the groom looked impudently about him, and the gamekeeper held his hand before his eyes. Nicolas looked well-fed, his imprisonment seemed to have done him good; he looked almost pleased round the hall, as if he felt himself flattered that so many people should be taking trouble about him. The groom, who had done his hair with a good deal of care, contemplated the assembly with a contemptuous expression.

The gamekeeper looked much care-worn, and drew away from his companions, and when the dwarf was on the point of whispering something to him, he turned indignantly aside. He looked up to the spectators' seats, and there he saw his wife, two of his sons and his daughters; the cellarman was not with them. The children seemed to have grown since he last saw them, and they had put on their Sunday clothes to witness, not the shame, certainly, but the honour of their father.

The gamekeeper moved restlessly on his seat, and said something with his lips to his wife, but without uttering a sound. He was saying to her in thought: Be calm, it will only last a couple of hours, and then we shall go home together. On the bench of the witnesses cited, there sat Sonnenkamp, Eric, and Roland. Roland occupied the place between his father and Eric, and he clung half fearfully to the latter.

The accusation was read aloud. Sonnenkamp was first summoned that he might acknowledge the stolen articles as his property.

Roland raised himself as he heard his father speak so mildly and kindly. Sonnenkamp expressed his regret that men fell into misfortune, but justice must have its way. He was dismissed, and he quitted the hall. The head gardener was the next witness called, and his evidence was scarcely audible. It was not till Eric was summoned, that silence and attention prevailed again.

Eric related the whole circumstance. There was a trembling in his voice only perceptible to himself, as he here before a public tribunal mentioned his visit to Wolfsgarten. He composed himself, and stated that the gamekeeper had certainly spoken with bitterness of the distinction between rich and poor; but he asserted at the same time that he did not consider the man capable of a low crime.

A strange murmur passed through the assembly, as Eric related how the gamekeeper had put to him the question: What would you do if you were the possessor of millions? The question was now widely promulgated. Knopf was summoned. He produced a written testimony from the old Herr Weidmann. The gamekeeper had been many years with him as a servant-lad, and he gave him the character of a man, who was incapable of deceit, much less of crime. Knopf then added from his own experience that the gamekeeper speculated upon subjects which he could not master.

Roland was summoned; he walked erect before the steps of the judgment seat. The gamekeeper nodded to him.

As Roland was not of age, he was not required to take an oath; it produced however a favourable impression when he said in an open tone of voice that he regarded his word as an oath.

He recognized the stolen things as his own; he thought that his father's rooms had been locked, but he would not venture to assert it as a fact, because he had not been near the rooms for many days previous to the theft. And then, without being asked, he expressed his conviction that the gamekeeper could have no share in the crime.

The gamekeeper rose at these words; the gendarme behind him was obliged to place his hand on his shoulder before he would sit down again. Again Eric was summoned to give more accurate details respecting the fact that the gamekeeper had requested to be shewn over the house a few days before the burglary. When Eric sat down again, Roland rose and asked: "Mr. President, may I say one word more?"

"Speak," said the President, encouragingly. "Say all you know."

With a firm step Roland advanced; he had the voice of a man, as he now exclaimed: "Yes, he often complained that one man starved while another gormandized. But still oftener he said, 'The hand would wither which retained unlawful goods.' Can a man say that, and then by night enter another's house and steal? I beg you, I implore you earnestly, speak out your conviction; this man is as innocent as you all are, as I am!"

He paused and stood as if fascinated to the spot. For a time there was a breathless silence throughout the whole assembly.

"Have you anything more to say?" asked the President.

Roland seemed to wake from his reverie; he replied: "No, nothing more, I thank you."

He returned to Eric, who held his hand in silence.

Roland's hand was icy cold, it grew warm in his. On the other side Knopf also seized the hand of his former pupil, but he could not hold it, for he was obliged to take off his spectacles; his spectacles were wet, for large tears were running down his eyes.

The discussion was short. It was proved that the gamekeeper knew nothing of things of value being buried in the kennel. He had given the coachman a night's shelter out of pure good-nature. The coachman and the dwarf could no longer deny their guilt, though the one endeavoured to throw the blame of the act upon the other. The jury retired; they soon returned into the hall, and the old master, who was among the jury, and had been chosen as foreman, announced, with his hand on his heart, their unanimous verdict. The ranger Claus, generally called gamekeeper, innocent. Nicholas and the groom guilty beyond all question.

The gamekeeper was at once liberated. Outside the hall of justice, as his wife and children surrounded him —the cellar-man was also there now—Roland made his way through the crowd, seized the hand of the gamekeeper, and pressed it warmly.

Sonnenkamp now appeared. He bowed on all sides, then he went up to the gamekeeper and congratulated him. He called Roland aside, and told him to drive home alone with Eric, as he must remain in the town and await a telegram. Roland begged and urged the gamekeeper and his family to get into the carriage with him. The gamekeeper declined. He went with his wife and children outside the fortifications, and as he stood on the banks of the Rhine, and the vast landscape opened once more before him, he exclaimed, raising his hands: 'Oh, good God, how beautiful is Thy sky, Thy waters, Thy vineyards, and Thy fields! If I

only knew why Thou hast allowed that devilish money to come into the world!"

"That we may drink a good glass of wine," exclaimed the wine gager, who had joined them. "Come into the Spade."

Recovering from his emotion, the gamekeeper gladly consented to accompany the gager into the inn of the Golden Spade. They were sitting comfortably together, when Eric and Roland drove past; the gamekeeper held up his glass to them at the window, and they stopped. Roland again begged the gamekeeper to come into the carriage. This time he assented, and he and his wife got in; the children had already gone home. Roland drove the liberated man in triumph through the town and villages. The wife looked down ashamed, at driving thus in a carriage; but the gamekeeper looked openly about him, and only remarked occasionally: "Everything has thriven without me."

CHAPTER IV.

THE same sun which was shining at Wolfsgarten, where Bella was struggling vehemently with her passionate feelings, the same sun which was shining through the green blinds in the justice room upon the seats of the accused, was glimmering also through the venetian blinds in the quiet sitting-room of the Professor's widow. Eric's mother was sitting working in her corner by the window, thinking of her son. He had faithfully related everything to her, but he had begged her to excuse him if his letters were irregular and hurried. For a time it was better for him to forget himself and all that belonged to him. At first he had mentioned Clodwig and Bella repeatedly, and the home feeling he enjoyed in being with them; and then Bella was no longer mentioned.

Since Clodwig and Bella's visit to the university town, Eric's letters had assumed a new aspect in his mother's eyes. Tante Claudine, who rarely spoke, had reminded the mother with what unusual interest Bella had contemplated a youthful picture of Eric; the mother, who had perceived it also, had seen in it only the interest of an artist, as the picture had been painted by a famous artist, and Bella was acknowledged to be a portrait painter of no ordinary importance. Now however when Eric wrote of Wolfsgarten, she had always perceived some strange allusions, and when he

ceased mentioning Wolfsgarten at all, it seemed to her still more remarkable.

It was noon, when the postman brought a letter from Clodwig. The writing was fine and careful, not a stroke hurried, though also none made with especial thought, it all seemed to flow equally, and the lines were at regular distances, though without much expenditure of space. The very sight of the letter awakened a feeling of pleasure, and equally decided and calm were the contents and the form of expression. He said in it that he should feel grateful to the professor's widow if she would accept his invitation to pay them a visit of some weeks. He referred to the friendly relation in which he had stood to her deceased husband, and the renewal of the old ties in their present connexion with Eric. Then he alluded to their mutual personal acquaintance, adding that throughout his long life he had never felt a hearty expectation which had not been responded to; and he therefore begged her not to disappoint him in his old age.

Bella had added underneath in large and hurried writing the request that Frau Dournay and Claudine would give her the honour of a visit; she said she only wrote a few words in the firm confidence that she should have the pleasure of conversing shortly. The doctor promised his medical assistance, and added that it would act as a defence and direction to his young friend Eric, again to meet his mother's eye. This expression caused the widow a good deal of thought; she was resolved to accept the invitation. Presently there was another knock, and Sonnenkamp's dispatch was brought in.

Frau Dournay had scarcely read it, when a heavy tread came up the stairs. The Major entered. The

widow started, she did not recognize him, she saw only his red head, with the short snow-white hair, and the orders on his breast. At the first moment it seemed to her as if he were the messenger from a court of justice, whose business in some way endangered Eric. The Major moreover did not state his mission very skilfully, for he said at once: "Frau Professorin, I have brought an execution; but I am not to drive you out of Paradise, but to imprison you in the Garden of Eden."

He had devised this during his journey, and had inaudibly repeated it to himself. It now came out so awkwardly, that the good woman could scarcely stand for trembling.

The Major called: "Pray keep seated, no one makes any ceremony with me, that everyone knows. I disturb no one's rest; I prefer people to remain seated when I come. Don't you feel the same? One is certain then that one is not disturbing."

"Do you come from my son?"

"Yes, I come from him. You see, I am not exactly one of the best sort, but I am also not one of the worst; one thing I can say in my favour, I have never in my life envied any one, but when you said 'my son,' then I did envy you. I cannot help thinking, if I had such a son as you!"

The Major delivered the letters from Sonnenkamp and the wife of the privy counsellor; he requested that they should be read at once, as they spared his words. The widow read, bade him once more welcome, and called her sister-in-law. The blinds towards the street were drawn up, the full stream of light poured in and fell on cheerful faces.

"What will you do?" asked Tante Claudine.

"There is no more question of will; we will accept the invitation."

"To whom?"

"Of course to Herr Sonnenkamp."

"Right," said the Major, smiling.

There were still many things to prepare before they could start. The Major promised that Joseph should come and bring everything; not a thread should be forgotten. He then withdrew, to return again in a few hours, for he had some friends of his order to visit. At noon, the Major was travelling with both ladies towards the Rhine, and was as proud and happy as if he had won the military chest of the enemy.

Eric and Roland were driving with the gamekeeper and his wife. When they reached a landmark, he begged them to stop, and he alighted.

"No, I will not drive here," he said. Various thoughts seemed at work in the gamekeeper's mind; the trial, the excitement of the first sight of nature after weeks of imprisonment, and his drive in triumph. He walked silently away, he took up a clod from a freshly-ploughed field and carried it for a time in his hand, and then threw it away.

"So I am innocent," he murmured to himself. "When a poor man has been ill and is well again, he is a healthy poor man, nothing more."

Roland and Eric alighted also and walked home with the gamekeeper and his wife. Suddenly they heard a voice from the vineyard; the Seven Pipers was approaching them with the halberd which the gamekeeper always carried as a token of his office. He gave it the gamekeeper and accompanied the party.

The dogs in the court-yard barked and the birds in the room fluttered about and twittered together, as

their master returned. The blackbird was louder than all, for she sang: Rejoice in life—but at the second line she stopped short. The gamekeeper looked round at everything as if he were just awaking. At last the whole family were seated round the table, eating the fine new potatoes, which a neighbour had kindly boiled for them. Never had Roland relished a dish so much. He was almost the sole talker; he told them how on his journey to Eric he had drunk coffee with the labouring women at the vineyard; he cleverly imitated the women and also the vine-dresser, who grudged America the money for her sugar. Roland, who had received back again his stolen watch, offered it to the gamekeeper as a lasting remembrance. But the gamekeeper would not accept it, not even when Eric and the Seven Pipers encouraged him to do so.

"Take it, father," said the cellarman, who now entered; he had come from the house of the Seven Pipers, having gone there to announce his father's acquittal to the eldest daughter with whom he was in love.

The Seven Pipers laughed at the gamekeeper for troubling himself so much and thinking so constantly of how to be rich; it was not at all necessary. Man was indeed hollow inside, but the rich man could not do more than eat himself satisfied and quench his thirst, and sleep well, and the bed on which one sleeps was of no consequence so long as one sleeps, and it was purely absurd to drive in a coach, for it was far better to go about on one's own strong legs.

Eric urged that it was time to be going home. As they turned from the village on to the high-road, a carriage approached, some one nodded to them from it, and the powerful voice of the Major exclaimed: "Battalion halt!"

They stopped; the carriage contained the Major with Eric's aunt and mother.

"That is the only thing I could now have wished for," cried Roland. "Major, the gamekeeper is acquitted, he is innocent."

They alighted, and the mother embraced Roland and her son, and Eric walked to the villa with his mother leaning on his arm, while on the other side she took Roland's hand, the carriage following behind. The Major offered his arm to the aunt, but she refused it; she apologized, but it was a peculiarity with her that she never took an arm.

"It is better too—Fräulein Milch thinks so also. You will become acquainted with her—will be good friends, you may rely upon it. Inconceivable how she learns everything. She knew that Count Clodwig had invited you. But we have our stratagems too, and we got before him. He whom fortune favours, carries the bride home, as the saying is." The mother could not speak, her heart was too full.

They were met at the villa by a friendly welcome. The privy counsellor's wife embraced and kissed the widow; Frau Ceres begged to be excused. As night drew on, Sonnenkamp also arrived. The moon was shining brightly as Eric and Roland accompanied the mother and aunt to the vine-covered cottage. And here, standing on the balcony, the mother once more held Eric's hand, and said: "If your father could see you, he would rejoice in you. You have still your good and pure expression."

BOOK VII.

CHAPTER I.

THE best thing with which a human heart can be filled and refreshed is a mother's love. All other love must be gained, conquered, merited, wrestled for, and guarded amid impediments; a mother's love alone one possesses always, unearned, undeserved, and ever ready. Why has not Roland such a mother's love in abundance? Eric was early by Roland's bed-side; it was never necessary to wake him; as soon as Eric gazed steadily at him, Roland awoke. He now opened his large eyes, and his first words were: "Your mother is here!"

The day seemed consecrated anew, for Eric and Roland went first of all to visit the mother. Her gentle calm mind conveyed a blessing in every word and movement and look, and she herself encouraged order and persistent duty, by telling them both that she should regard it as a proof of love and affection, if they continued their work now, as heretofore. So they were both soon seated at their study.

The distinguishing honour which the privy counsellor's wife showed to the professor's widow, gave her a position which she would perhaps have acquired by

degrees, but which was now at once assigned to her as if by a high decree; for the privy counsellor's wife constantly repeated, that the widow had been in her day the most distinguished lady at the court, which even now missed her painfully. The professor's widow felt herself somewhat oppressed by such exaggerated prominence, still she was grateful to her honourable friend; she saw the effort to transform her evident poverty and dependent position, into one of authority and respect.

Even Fräulein Perini was subdued by the nature of the widow, for there was such a gentle dignity and kindliness about her, that unworthy and impure thoughts could not be harboured in her presence; at the same time, she was full of enthusiasm, and fostered as it had been by her husband's idealistic mind, it now revived anew in intercourse with her son. At noon there came a letter from Bella. She bade the professor's widow welcome, and announced that she would visit her on the following day.

Sonnenkamp went to his wife's apartment; she sent him word through a maid who was waiting in the ante-room, that she did not wish to see any one. He paid no attention to this and went further and found Frau Ceres lying on the sofa with the windows darkened. She looked at him with her large dark eyes, she did not speak a word, she only gave him her small white hand. He kissed the hand, then he began to explain to her that they were advancing the plan they had in view by the guest who was now with them, for through her interest they might succeed in opening the doors that led to the apartments of the royal palace. At the mention of the palace, Frau Ceres somewhat raised herself; she still did not speak a word, but

her restless eye showed how the hope affected her. Like some bright fairy tale, Sonnenkamp had always, while across the ocean or on his many wanderings, held up to his wife the prospect of being admitted into the court circles, and the idea floated before Frau Ceres's mind, as of some superhuman sphere, where everything glitters and sparkles for ever, and a God-like existence is prolonged indefinitely. Wherever she came, she heard of this happiness, and saw how all were striving for this court circle, and she was angry with her husband that he had promised it to her so long and so often and had never fulfilled his word. They were in Europe, they had retired into seclusion which people said was delightful; but she was constantly expecting that she would be summoned to the court.

Why was it so long delayed? why were people so strange? Even Bella, the only one who showed herself friendly to her, treated her like a parrot, like some curious bird, in whose brilliant colour the eye takes delight, but with which one has nothing in common except occasionally to drop it a piece of sugar, or to bestow on it a compliment. The remembrance of how she had outshone all at the fête of Herr von Endlich now seemed to Frau Ceres unsatisfactory and imperfect.

With all her apparent indolence and want of interest, Frau Ceres had always one idea at work in her mind, and this idea had been implanted there by Sonnenkamp: it had become stronger than he intended, for it pervaded his wife's whole being. He continued now with great adroitness to represent that a new lustre was given to the whole house, and the goal rendered certain by the presence of the professor's widow—to whom even the privy counsellor's wife was subordinate,

inasmuch as she had been the favourite and most influential lady of the court, in fact the friend and intimate confidante of the widowed princess. Sonnenkamp managed to make his wisdom so apparent, that at last Frau Ceres was induced to exclaim: "You are indeed very wise. I will speak with the mother of the tutor."

He now gave her a lesson as to how she should behave, but like a spoilt child Frau Ceres shrieked, beat her hands, stamped with her feet, and said: "I don't want lectures! Don't say another word! Bring the woman to me."

Sonnenkamp went to Frau Dournay; he longed to give her a hint or two respecting her demeanor to his wife, but he was afraid of any direct suggestion and he only said: "My dear little wife is rather spoilt and is very nervous."

Frau Dournay came to Frau Ceres, who was lying quietly on the sofa. As the widow gracefully bowed, Frau Ceres exclaimed: "You must teach me that! I should like to bow like that. They bow like that at court, do they not?"

Frau Dournay scarcely knew what reply to make. Was she more than nervous? was she crazy? She quickly, however, recovered composure enough to say: "I can well imagine that our manners must seem somewhat strange to you after your free republic; I, too, think that it is far better to shake hands on first meeting."

She held out her hand, and Frau Ceres extended hers; as if forgetting herself, she rose as she did so.

"You are ill, I will not disturb you long," said Frau Dournay.

Frau Ceres thought it better still to assume illness, and she said: "Oh yes, I am always ill. But stay, I beg you."

And as the mother talked, the sound of her voice, the deep feeling tone, produced such an effect on Frau Ceres that she closed her eyes, and when she opened them again large tears were standing on the long eye-lashes. The professor's widow regretted exciting her so much, but Frau Ceres shook her head vehemently.

"No, no, I thank you. These tears lie here—here!" She beat her breast violently. "I thank you."

The mother was about to go away, but Frau Ceres rose quickly, threw herself on her knees before her, kissed her hand and cried: "Protect me! be my mother! I have never said the word mother to anyone."

Frau Dournay started with terror, as if she had been seized by a maniac. She raised Frau Ceres, and said: "My child, I would gladly be a mother to you. I am glad if I can do anything here, and I will do it heartily. But now, I pray, calm yourself."

She led Frau Ceres back again to the sofa, laid her carefully down, and covered her over with a large shawl; it was a strange confusion of soft pillows, in which Frau Ceres always lay muffled up and almost buried. Frau Ceres held the hand of the mother firmly grasped and sobbed continuously. The widow extolled Frau Ceres' happiness in having such a son as Roland. When she related how she had met Roland, Frau Ceres turned and kissed her hand. With calm prudence, the widow went on to say that she herself was a woman of many peculiarities, and that it was not so easy to live with her; she had accustomed herself too much to solitude, and she feared she was not young and merry enough to be companion to a lady who required the brilliancy and amusements of noisy life.

Frau Ceres begged the professor's widow to draw

back the curtain a little, and as she saw the stranger more distinctly, she smiled; then her face with its thin, slightly parted lips assumed again the expression of fretfulness, which had become habitual to it: she took her fan and began fanning herself for coolness. At last she said: "You cannot imagine how stupid I am, and I should so like to be clever and to have learned things: but he did not wish it, and he has never allowed me to learn anything, and has always said, You are dearest and most beautiful to me as you are. Yes, it may be to him, but not to myself. If Madame Perini were not so good, I don't know at all what I should do. Do you also play whist? Are you fond of nature? I am very silly, am I not?"

Frau Ceres had, perhaps, expected that Frau Dournay would contradict her, but she did not do so; she said rather: "I have known many women like yourself, and I could tell you why you are always ill."

"Why? Do you know?"

"Yes. But it is not flattering."

"Oh, do tell me."

"My dear child! you are always ill, because you are always idle. When a human being has nothing to do, his health is an occupation."

"Oh! you are wise!" cried Frau Ceres, "but I am weak."

There was, indeed, something defenceless and helpless about her. As Herr Sonnenkamp regarded her as a frail toy, she had become fearful also about herself; at the same time she was thoroughly indolent, and the slightest trouble was a burden to her. She did not know whether hearing or seeing fatigued her most, still she found the latter the most laborious, because when she read she had to hold the book and keep a fixed posi-

tion. She had Fräulein Perini, therefore, who always read aloud to her; and then, whenever the fancy took her, she could fall asleep. It was so even now. While the professor's widow was still speaking, Frau Ceres suddenly let her hand drop, she had fallen asleep. The widow sat in the apartment, in which everything looked so rich and magnificent, as if she had been transported into a fairy tale.

She held her breath, scarcely knowing what it were best to do. Here were enigmas indeed. She did not venture to change her position, for fear of waking the sleeper. At length the latter turned herself and said: "Ah, go now—go now, I will soon come myself."

The widow went. Sonnenkamp was waiting for her at the door.

"How is she to you?" he asked.

"Like a good child," replied the mother. "I hope I may succeed in calming the excitement of your wife. But I have a request: never ask me what we have talked of. If I am to obtain your wife's confidence, I must be able conscientiously to say, that she is speaking with me alone, and that whatever she communicates to me, will never pass my lips. Will you promise me to let us women have free scope alone?"

"Yes," replied Sonnenkamp.

It seemed to him hard to assent to this, but he felt obliged to do so.

On the following day Prancken arrived, and greeted Frau Dournay with the whole array of his worldly manners. She let him see at once that she regarded him as a son of the house, and she did this with so much reserve and such graceful certainty, that he was thoroughly happy.

Prancken spoke of his sister and brother-in-law, and

how honoured Eric was at Wolfsgarten; and he cleverly insinuated that he hoped much that the widow's presence would tend to calm and soften his sister, who had recently been again liable to fits of passionate excitement. He intimated this cautiously, only implying that it was a hard task to live with a husband so much older than herself, though so noble in character, and that unexpectedly an emotion took possession of the feelings. Frau Dournay understood what he meant better than Prancken imagined.

Prancken could not resist exhibiting something of his religious change of feeling. He did this as an act of confidence and with caution, and yet with a certain expressiveness. As if in a vision, he suddenly saw this woman by Manna's side, who was opening her whole heart to her; he pictured her in return assuring Manna that he acknowledged his change of heart before all the world; indeed, it now occurred to him that the lady superior had praised this very woman in Manna's presence.

A smile passed over his features as he thought that this woman might be the best person to employ in dissuading Manna from her resolve to take the veil.

Sonnenkamp had wished only to give up the villa as the price of his elevation to rank,—for the sum paid for it by the privy counsellor was really only nominal,—but he was obliged to yield to Prancken's assurance that this was not feasible; besides, it was wiser to be on friendly terms as a neighbour with so powerful a man, and everything would follow as a matter of course.

A merry comedy was therefore performed, Sonnenkamp gave the privy counsellor's wife a considerable sum, which she handed over to him a quarter-of-an-

hour later as the price of the villa. The privy counsellor was Herr Sonnenkamp's neighbour. When Herr Sonnenkamp strolled out with Prancken in the soft evening, he listened graciously to Prancken's remark that it was well that the privy counsellor had at once taken the villa, for had it occurred later, shortly before or after the desired event, it would have caused a good deal of slander.

"My dear young friend," said the latter, and he laid his hand confidentially on Prancken's shoulder, "you have certainly had to do with usurers; I know this soft-hearted fraternity, they hang together like a secret priesthood. A history of bribery would afford the most delightful glimpses into the so-called human heart. I know different nations and different classes; I have everywhere attempted it, and have never succeeded."

Prancken was startled for the first time at his future father-in-law; he gave him credit for much, but that he should speak in this unembarrassed manner of universal bribery, was repugnant to him, and he felt it extremely painful to stand in such a close relation to him.

Sonnenkamp continued—"My father was a virtuoso in the art of bribery. In Poland he never bribed in any other way but this; if he gave a note of a hundred or thousand guldens, he would tear the note in two and keep one half himself, giving the other to the person bribed, and he would never give up the other half, until what he required had taken place. You think, do you not, that it was not necessary, thus to divide the note with the privy counsellor's wife?"

Prancken felt himself offended at the idea of a lady

of rank being thus designated and placed in such a position. He gave Sonnenkamp the most convincing assurances, and the latter declared: "I find everything quite correct. As soon as a nation enters into more complicated circumstances, bribery exists and must exist, sometimes openly, sometimes covertly, and nothing is more varied than the forms of bribery;—I know that well."

As Prancken stood still with astonishment, Sonnenkamp, growing more and more confidential, continued: "Young friend, it is all the same whether I purchase for myself an agent or a vote for my election as member of parliament or congress, or whether I purchase for myself an agent or a vote for my election to rank."

In Prancken's heart there was an indescribable fear of the man, and this fear was changing into contempt. He even now resolved that when Manna was his own, he would keep as aloof as possible from him.

Frau Dournay, living in the greenhouse, soon felt how difficult it must be for Eric to maintain a fixed condition of mind and a permanent direction of thought for himself and Roland, as he perpetually had to struggle with distracting circumstances.

As if naturally, a consecrated circle formed itself round herself; whoever approached her, assumed involuntarily a nobler bearing, and attuned his words to a moderate and suitable key. She was like a priestess, who unceasingly feeds the flame on an altar. Purity in the highest signification of the word was the impression which her appearance and manner left, for she was a pure nature in everything that she thought and felt; she had been a lady of the court for thirteen years; she knew the actual world; but she had retained through all a breath of ideality. She had never

been what is called striking; she was rather stout, very pale, and she had that look of cool purity, such as one sees in pictures of comfortable Dutch women. She could listen calmly to any communication, and remain attentive till she replied. At questions, which she did not care to answer, she never allowed herself to be urged beyond the barrier she had fixed. She never said a word for the sake of display, nor smiled when there was nothing to smile at; she gave every expression its natural tone, and she bestowed the requisite attention upon everything she heard.

The large grand piano in the music hall, which had so long been unopened, now sounded brightly and festively, and Roland, who had completely neglected all practice, acquired fresh desire for music, and became the aunt's pupil. Sonnenkamp's countenance wore an expression of satisfaction, such as had never been seen on it before.

One day, when Tante Claudine had been playing beautifully, and, to suit Eric's fancy, the piece had been twice repeated, Frau Ceres said to his mother:—"I envy you that you understand and enjoy everything so thoroughly."

She evidently prided herself on repeating this studied phrase, but the professor's widow despoiled her of her borrowed pleasures, by saying—

"Everyone has his own pleasure, whether in nature or in art, so long as it is true. It is not necessary to understand everything, or to know everything accurately, in order to take pleasure in it. I delight in these hills, without knowing how high they are, or of what strata they are formed, and all that scholars know about them. So you, too, can take pleasure in music."

Frau Ceres did not know it, but she felt it—that we can receive extreme delight from that which we gain from nature alone.

The calm routine of daily life was again suddenly interrupted; a carriage drove along the crisp gravel of the court-yard, a long silk dress rustled, and Bella and her husband appeared. It is a bit of home in a foreign land, when we are greeted by old friends under new circumstances. Clodwig and Bella's visit was an agreeable interest to the professor's widow. Bella embraced her somewhat passionately, Clodwig, on the contrary, seized her hand in both his own.

"Where is your nephew?" inquired Bella, holding the hand of the aunt; she seemed obliged to grasp something.

With a restless glance, now to Clodwig and now to Bella, the mother explained that the studies must not be interrupted by any pleasant event in the house, such as a visit like the present. She emphasized the expression, event in the house.

Bella stood with her eyes fixed on the ground. The widow observed her scrutinizingly. Bella seemed in very good spirits; she was dressed beautifully in evening attire, and she wore a large blue silk shawl, from which, when she held out her hand, her bare arm appeared in all its beauty.

They went into the garden, and Sonnenkamp left them to announce their arrival to his wife. He would have done anything that Frau Ceres should not have been ill to-day. Clodwig walked with Tante Claudine; Bella with the mother. Bella made many inquiries. Her cheeks glowed; she let her shawl fall a little, and it revealed a beautiful bosom, full and well-formed.

"It is a pity that Clodwig did not know your sister-in-law before," she said suddenly.

"He knew her well, and she was, as you know, unfortunately for her own happiness, one of the most distinguished ladies at the court. That was of course before your time."

Bella was silent; the mother cast an inquiring glance at her. What was the matter with her? Whence arose all this restlessness, this flitting from one subject to another?

Eric and Roland came. Bella quickly drew her shawl over her neck and arm; she scarcely held out the tips of her fingers to Eric. Roland was extremely merry, Eric exceedingly grave; whenever he looked at Bella he immediately turned his head away. She congratulated him on his mother's arrival, and said—

"I think, if anyone met you travelling, they would see it written in your face, that you still have the happiness of possessing a mother."

She said this with feeling, and yet at the same time there was a strange smile on her countenance, and she looked round as if she expected to reap honour for the idea.

Sonnenkamp came back, stroking his chin comfortably as he begged the ladies to come up to his wife, who had been made quite well by the arrival of such guests. He proposed that the gentlemen should drive to the castle, in order to inspect the progress of the building and to look at the place in which the Roman antiquities had been discovered. Bella had only a short bantering conversation with Sonnenkamp, who had stolen away her dear guests, then she went with the ladies into the garden-room, where Frau Ceres was waiting for them. The gentlemen drove to the castle.

Frau Ceres was soon ready to go into the music hall, and the aunt played without much invitation; Bella sat between the mother and Frau Ceres, and Fräulein Perini stood at the piano.

When the aunt had finished the first piece, Bella said—"Fräulein Dournay, do you ever accompany your nephew when he sings?"

The aunt replied in the negative.

Again the widow cast a quick glance at Bella, who seemed constantly thinking of Eric, and unable to conceal, and indeed not wishing to conceal that she did so. While the aunt was playing another piece, Bella said to the mother—"I have a request to make to you; give me your sister-in-law to stay with me at Wolfsgarten."

"I have no right to dispose of my sister-in-law. But excuse me, she is naturally so unassuming, yet when she is playing every word spoken offends her."

Bella was silent. But while they were listening to Mozart's refreshing music, the thoughts of the two ladies went in two different directions. What Bella was thinking of, we can scarcely say, but her whole being trembled with alternate joy and sorrow, renunciation and defiance. Frau Dournay, however, confirmed a previous observation and felt herself contaminated by the mere idea.

Bella's cheeks glowed more and more, her lips trembled, and suddenly it occurred to her that she had better at once settle the matter. She urged the aunt and the mother so vehemently, and implored them in such a child-like manner, that at last it was agreed that Tante Claudine should pay her a visit almost immediately, and should stay a short time with her. "You will see," she said, half in triumph to the

mother, "Fräulein Dournay will be Clodwig's nearest friend; they are quite made for each other."

The Professor's widow looked fixedly at her. Had matters gone so far that the wife wanted to make compensation to her husband?

Before they went to dinner the ladies withdrew to attend to their toilet. Frau Dournay was in her dressing-room; she had loosened her long, whitening hair, and she sat for some time silent, with her hands folded in her lap. It seemed to her as if her head had received a blow through the irrefutable tokens she had observed. Her heart felt oppressed, and her eyes ached with tears that would not flow. For this, then—for this a child is nurtured, watched, and filled with all that is good, that it may end thus? No, not end, rather begin incalculable confusion and ruin? For this the mind is endowed with all knowledge, that it may use it for amusement and for a mask, and for a mantle to cover baseness.

"Oh! my God—my God!" she moaned, as she covered her face with both her hands.

All that had been ruined passed before her; above all the pure, free nature of her son. She could have no more pleasure in the looks, the words, the appearance of this son; he had misused them all for lying and deceit. Oh! had his father lived to see it! . . . . Clodwig, who cherishes such an unequalled friendship, is looked at by them, and greeted by them, and addressed by them, and through it all they are desiring his death.

Presently she heard Eric, who had asked after her, and was on the point of going away; she called to him that he should enter. Eric came towards her, looking full of astonishment. Never had he seen her

thus, with her long loose hair, and her very face looked grey.

"You seem excited; may I know the cause?" asked Eric.

"Sit down."

Eric seated himself. His mother held her hand to his brow. Dare she venture to warn her son plainly, and with straightforwardness?

"Dear son," she began, in a depressed tone, "bear with me if I, disturbed in my solitude and repose, cannot yet feel accustomed to this restless life. But what did I want to say to you now? Yes, that is it: Countess Wolfsgarten, the wife of our friend," she emphasized this expression calmly and decidedly, and made a short pause; then she continued—"Countess Wolfsgarten wishes that Tante Claudine should go and stay with her."

"That would be very nice."

"Really? And why? Do you not remember that I shall be suddenly alone, and in a strange house?"

"Ah, dear mother, you are not alone—you are never alone . . . And my aunt will give Countess Bella a calmness and a composure which she may perhaps need."

The mother's eye grew calmer; her expression was fixed, as if electrified, and she said, smilingly—"Well, each has his own mission. May I ask in what light Countess Bella, our friend's wife, appears to you?"

A thrill of pain darted through Eric's heart. He guessed that he had troubled his mother's heart. And perhaps Bella had betrayed by some passionate word that which could not and might not be. There was a pause, and the mother asked again, with a changing expression—"Why do you not answer me?"

"Ah, mother, I am less prepared than I thought myself; I no longer trust so certainly to my opinion of others."

"You may say something unprepared to me," replied the mother, still looking down.

"I think, then, that there is in her a struggle between worldliness and renunciation of the world. . . . It seems to me as if something had been repressed and checked in her development, and as if she were not perfect enough for a husband like Clodwig."

"Yes, he is a noble man, and it would be sacrilege to vex him," said the mother, with emphasis. The words were uttered sharply, and she continued—"Bella is unfortunately a child of that unhappy class of society in which people only go to the theatre for the love of ridicule, and the display of wit, in which they only go to church for the sake of having bowed at the name of God, and in which the woman is perfectly useless unless she is beautiful, and understands with advancing years both how to intrigue and how to assume piety. Such a being may say to herself—'During my life I have covered eight hundred or a thousand ells of canvas with flowers for luxurious sofa pillows.' Is that a life worth living? And now she has no children, and no natural duties combined with those to her husband."

"Are you not judging her too severely?" interposed Eric. "At any rate, it would be good for Tante Claudine to accept the invitation; she might exercise a softening and beneficial influence upon her; her calm nature, which never has to renounce anything, because she never desires anything for herself, is just the thing for her."

"Well, Claudine will go to Wolfsgarten. But now

we have chattered enough; and now go, for I must dress for dinner."

She kissed his forehead, and he went. Outside the door, however, he stood still, and drew a deep breath at the thought that he no longer needed the warning.

How was it, however, with Bella?

It was decided that Claudine would return with them to Wolfsgarten. In order to give her time for preparation, they proposed staying the night there, and taking her back with them on the following day. Bella accepted a parrot from Sonnenkamp, and chose to have the wildest of all; she promised to tame it.

It was evening, and they were obliged to comply with Roland's wish that they should go out with him on the Rhine. Claudine went with Bella to the boat, Fräulein Perini retired with Frau Ceres, the professor's widow remained with Clodwig, and Sonnenkamp begged to be excused, as he had letters to write. Bella laughed and joked in the boat, sometimes dipping her hand in the waves, and playing with the wedding-ring on her finger, and pushing it up and down, and then again dipping her hand in the Rhine.

"This visit of your mother's vexes me," said Bella softly to Eric.

"How? it vexes you?"

"Yes, it is offensive that this man with his money . . . . that by means of money we should be able to effect such transformations in people."

Eric stared at her, then he seized the oar and made high waves rise. Bella could not overcome her restlessness—she got up, she sat down, she plunged her hand into the water, she bent forward as if she would fling herself into the river, then, throwing back her head, she placed herself at the helm, her dress flut-

tering and rustling in the light breeze as she looked wildly round; then she seated herself, and said softly to Eric—"Your mother——"

Eric looked at her inquiringly, and she continued: "Oh, how often have I heard your mother pitied, derided, and sympathized with, because she obeyed the impulse of her heart and wedded the man of her love. Eight hundred dollars' value and pure love besides, was a saying for a long time. And, what are others? Puppets, dolls, talking, playing, dancing, slandering puppets! A peasant woman, gathering ears barefoot among the stubble, is happier and freer than the lady leaning back in her carriage, fanning herself cool and driving through the streets. Oh, that any one had the power to shatter this hollow, lying world! Who is there who enjoys life, actual life?"

Eric saw the violent struggle at work in this woman's heart. How unjust men were to her, the doctor, and even his mother. He admired her, his heart beat, he fancied he felt something like love within him. No, that might not be! He would appeal to the daring of her nature, he would arouse it, but how was he to do so?

It was evening when they got out of the boat and walked towards the villa. Roland went with Claudine, Bella and Eric walked behind them, she had placed her arm in his and they paused.

"I should like to be something to you," began Eric calmly.

She gazed at him with those eyes, over which the brows seemed more and more to project, the corners of her mouth expressed annoyance; her lips looked feverishly eager; there was nothing wanting but the double plume on her head and the serpents' heads be-

neath her chin—it was the figure of the Medusa. Eric shivered, he controlled himself by force and continued: "You are a free spirit, I should like to be so also—I will be so. There was a time when you robbed me of nightly repose, and of thought; there was an hour when I could have embraced you, and kissed you, and told you I loved you. But then"—he pressed his hand to his heart—"a ball was sent through my brain. Do you see the abyss, on the brink of which I stood?"

Bella fixed her eyes on him, and he continued: "I saw how everything was ruined by this love, and I said to myself: we are placed in this world to live, and knowledge and education are given us in order that through them we may advance to life and not to death. How could I look at a noble man, at the sun in the heavens? how could I educate a human being, and have the word mother on my lips"—

He paused, he put his hand to his forehead, and his voice faltered; I thought you were a man, and now I see that you are a pet child, said Bella to herself, but she did not utter her thoughts aloud. She seized a bough from the road-side and broke it off.

Eric continued: "It is not love, it may not be love; love can not spring out of treachery. I asked myself: has life, study, thoughts on general subjects robbed me of the power of love? No, I know not—I am speaking to you as if I were miles away from you, a dead man."

Bella broke the twig and threw it away; then she asked: "Why are we staying here?"

"My friend," resumed Eric, drawing a deep breath; "stay but for one minute. Let me tell you, you are happy, if you will understand your life; you can and must understand it, and I, lacerated as my heart is, will do my duty and learn to understand my happiness. I

was proud, I thought I had penetrated and subdued the world, and you also felt the same; let not the fact of our both meeting, tend to our destruction, but let it be a stimulant to purity of life. I can see in the future that days will come when we shall calmly hold out our hand to each other and say, or not say, but feel and know, that it was a pure moment, though one of bitter struggle, in which we raised instead of humbling ourselves and disgracing ourselves—we will help to elevate each other and not to destroy the just claims of our mutual lives."

Bella laughed aloud; she would gladly have restrained it, but she could not help it, for she thought within herself; I adhere to my old belief, there is no such thing as love.

Eric was startled, he restrained himself with all his power, and said: "Let me now say farewell to you. If we ever meet again——"

"No, stay!" cried Bella, seizing him by the arm, but quickly, as if she had touched a serpent, she let it go again. She stood two steps in front of him, threw her head back, and said: "I thank you, I believe you. I could have said, you have deceived yourself; I—I will not."

She looked round confused, moved her head to either side, and when she was calm again, she said: "You are right. Well. It is over. This also."

She seemed looking for something which she could give Eric, she could not find it, and a bygone half suppressed thought now found vent as an anxiety, for she exclaimed: "Let yourself be warned. Take care of my brother; he can be terrible."

Eric went away; he walked on calmly and silently. He paused when he reached the weeping ash and then

returned to the villa. He saw the carriage standing in the court-yard; Clodwig was getting in; he called to Eric and explained to him that they would send the carriage on the following day to fetch Tante Claudine. The mother was standing by Bella, who was talking with great animation; presently she turned round, held out her gloved hand to Eric and said: "Good night, Captain Dournay."

Eric went with his mother; she led him by the hand, she felt the trembling of his hand, but she did not speak a word. When they reached the greenhouse, he kissed his mother; and she knew that he kissed her with pure lips.

CHAPTER II.

BELLA sat silently in the carriage by her husband's side, as they drove home. Clodwig at last remarked: "It is delightful to see a woman on the verge of sixty, whose mind has never entertained a thought of which she has to repent."

Bella turned hastily round. What was this? Did he guess what had happened with her? It cannot be, she thought, or he would not have said that. Still, perhaps, it is his mode of censure, to point to an unspotted life.

"That woman is very happy in her son," she replied.

Clodwig looked round as if some one had seized him. Could Bella have an idea that the thought had flashed across his mind, how would it be if this woman were his wife—and then, Eric his son? So they both drove silently on; each was the victim of bitter thoughts. The carriage rattled so strangely, the wheels creaked, and the maid and coachman on the box looked to Bella like monstrous forms, and the passing shadows in the moonlight, formed by the carriage and its occupants, appeared like dream-visions. Anger, shame, pride, condemnation, all those feelings at once stormed Bella's heart.

As they drove down the hill to Wolfsgarten, a feeling of imprisonment again came over her; she thought her hands were chained, and she brought them from under her mantle. Clodwig fancied that she was look-

ing for his hand, and he seized hers and clasped them silently. Thus in silence they arrived at Wolfsgarten.

Meanwhile Eric sauntered about long in the silent night.

There is a wound fever of the heart, no less violent and needful of care than that of the body. But as the dew lay on tree and grass, and on Eric's face, so did a dew also refresh his heart. It was late when he reached home, and in his night of dreams he seemed struggling with the waters of the Rhine, and unable to overcome the waves. He screamed, but a towing-boat drowned his voice, and from the helm of a vessel the steerswoman looked mockingly down upon him—and suddenly it was no longer the steerswoman, but a female figure with a pair of plumes and two luminous and sparkling eyes.

Early in the morning a carriage arrived from Wolfsgarten, to fetch Claudine. For thirty years, ever since her marriage with the Professor, the mother had never passed a day without her sister. To both of them it seemed scarcely conceivable that one could live apart from the other, and yet they had resolved on it, and it must be. Sonnenkamp was very polite; he made Claudine promise that she would consider his house as her home, and would only remain a guest at Wolfsgarten for a few days. He gave the coachman a basket full of carefully-packed grapes and bananas; the cage with the parrot was placed by the side of Claudine. The parrot screamed and quarrelled, as they drove away, and screamed and quarrelled the whole way; it seemed not to like leaving Villa Eden.

Bella's visit had produced in the house a feeling of restlessness which affected each, and this restlessness became all the more evident as they missed Claudine.

Bella had taken something away with her which seemed necessary to life. The house was again soundless.

Sonnenkamp expressed his regret that his wife was not fitted to entertain the families of the neighbourhood, and to keep up a sociable intercourse. Frau Dournay had herself a desire to see something of the society of the neighbourhood, and one fine autumn Sunday stated her intention of paying several visits. She visited the doctor's wife, the sheriff's family, and others, and then returned to the villa.

The first person who met them in the court-yard was the major; he looked rather out of humour, but his whole face brightened as Frau Dournay said she intended to visit him and Fräulein Milch that afternoon, and as she unfortunately could not drink wine at all hours according to the custom in that part of the country, she would take a simple cup of coffee with them. The major soon left, and sent one of the steward's children to Fräulein Milch with the message.

Frau Dournay was extremely animated, and Eric expressed his pleasure that she also felt somewhat of the intoxication which Rhine life produces.

Never had the major been merrier at the Sunday dinners than on this day; he even forgot to sign to Joseph to give him again a glass of Burgundy. Frau Ceres smiled and looked embarrassed as the widow said how delightfully refreshed she had been by the view over the river and mountains, and still more how she had enjoyed having a glimpse of genuine home life. She knew but little, it was true, of foreign countries, but there was no country which surpassed Germany in its sterling nature and wide-spread civilization; cities and villages, which were only known by name to the

hasty traveller, possessed in their retirement the fairest and best ornaments that could adorn humanity.

"As far as the church-bells sound, no better sermon has been preached to-day," said the major to Eric. Then he rose, "Yes, long life to the mother—knock glasses with me all of you—long life to the mother; and she not only lives, but she makes others gain a beautiful and right view of life, and the architect of all the worlds will bless her for it. My brothers! . . I meant to say my — my — long life to the professor's widow."

Never had the major brought out such a long toast, and never was he more satisfied than on this day. He went homewards soon after dinner, and on the way he kept repeating to himself the words of the toast, for it was his main pride to be able to tell Fräulein Milch word for word his beautiful speech. The fame of the whole world was nothing if she did not praise him; she understood everything better than any one else.

When he reached his home, and Fräulein Milch met him with lamentations that her cream had turned sour and that she could not get any more in the whole village, he signed to her with his hand that she was not to speak for fear he should forget his toast, and placing himself in front of her, he said: "I said all this at dinner to-day."

Laadi looked up at her master as he delivered such a forcible oration, and when he had finished she barked as a token of approval. The major did not, of course, mean to be untrue, but the speech was far finer, and at any rate longer when he repeated it to Fräulein Milch. When he had ended, she said, "I am only glad that some good people have also heard your words." For Fräulein Milch was not favourably inclined to Herr

and Frau Sonnenkamp, nor, above all, to Fraulein Perini.

"Why have you not spread our beautiful white table-cloth?" asked the major, as he saw the neatly-arranged coffee-table in the garden.

"Because the white one is too dazzling in the sun."

"It is true—it is quite right. Shall I not shut up Laadi? She is so importunate."

"No, leave the dog free."

The major reflected whether there was not something he could do to receive his guests worthily. He was successful. He had never borrowed anything before, but to-day he thought he might make an exception. He requested the cook of the old master to give him a little fresh cream. He contrived to place the cream on the table without Fräulein Milch perceiving it. He held his hand before his mouth to prevent his laughing at her astonishment at suddenly finding cream on the table. He went into the room and brought out his large leather arm-chair for the widow to sit in; but Fräulein Milch, who joined him, showed him to his horror that the arm-chair could not stand the bright light of the open air; and it was taken back again.

Fräulein Milch begged the major to be quiet, and now his face assumed an expression as if he were going to cry. He put his hand on Fräulein Milch's shoulder and said: "It is hard—very hard—terrible—bad—very bad—very terrible that I may not say to Frau Dournay: See, this my wife."

Fräulein Milch turned quickly round; her expression was suddenly chilling.

"For heaven's sake what do you mean?"

The dog barked as if to say: What is all this about? why are you looking so angrily at each other?

"I am quiet—I am quiet! Be still, Laadi," said the major soothingly, and he was so tired that he was obliged to sit down; he tried to light his long pipe, but it went out again. The major was standing at the garden hedge, drumming with his fingers on a lath; he was staring so absently, that the guests stood before him, and he had not seen them arrive. The greeting between the professor's widow and Fräulein Milch was in nowise as familiar as the major had hoped. Both ladies evidently scrutinized each other severely. The Major laughed in his own mind that Fräulein Milch had not observed the cream; she poured it out, as if it were quite a matter of course. Presently, however, he patted his forehead with his stumpy fingers, saying to himself: "She is far too wise, she will make no fuss before strangers. Ah, she is so wise, one can never learn her thoroughly."

He would gladly have said this to the widow, but he had resolved on this occasion to speak as little as possible; Fräulein Milch was alone to speak. It seemed, however, difficult to bring about any conversation at all. Frau Ceres asked Fräulein Milch if she had been born in this part of the country. She answered briefly in the negative. The major hit upon a good expedient. Two strange horses in the stable must be left alone together; they knock themselves, perhaps, a little, but at last they agree. So he contrived to tell Roland and Eric all about the vineyard, which was to yield wine for the first time this year; and he asked them to accompany him to it.

The two ladies were now left alone. Frau Dournay expressed her pleasure in the rich life here and in the country generally, saying that it not only abounded in quiet nooks full of exquisite beauty, but also in human

natures, who nurtured and cultivated in private their fine understandings and elevated feelings.

Fräulein Milch, who had been seated with her cup rather away from the table, now drew nearer and said that she did not rely upon the correctness of her own perception, with regard to cheerful human life; she saw men, it is true, jesting on Sundays and holidays, singing and walking up and down the hills with garlands on their heads, but any one who was not in the midst of their merry doings, and who contemplated them only from the window, or standing at the garden hedge, had no right judgment respecting them; one saw the people dancing but heard no music.

Frau Dournay inquired after the poor of the neighbourhood, and whether they afforded Fräulein Milch closer insight into human life. With a smile Fräulein Milch replied: "Yes, the poor creatures! The vine-dressers always appear to me like musicians; they fatigue themselves in making music to which others dance; still they are merry enough themselves."

The manner in which Fräulein Milch expressed herself surprised Frau Dournay; she had expected a commonplace talkative hostess, and she found instead a refinement of thought and delicacy of feeling, such as betokened mature deliberation. She mentioned Sonnenkamp's vast activity; Fräulein Milch did not enter further into the subject, she only said that Herr Sonnenkamp had not an ungentle heart, but that he had no regular system of benevolence. She regretted that Manna was not at home; and added that it would be better for the daughter of the house to regulate and dispense her father's charities, than to shut herself up in a convent. Forgetting her former reserve Fräulein Milch declared that Manna must have experienced

some inconceivable injury, for it was far from natural to leap suddenly from such exuberant merriment to such lowliness and humility.

"Towards myself!" added Fräulein Milch, blushing, "the child showed an aversion, which was instilled into her by Fräulein Perini."

Frau Dournay mentioned that Herr Sonnenkamp had wished to put into her hands the origination of a plan for extensive charity, and she asked if Fräulein Milch would assist her in it. The latter promised to do so; but she repeated her former statement, that it would be more suitable for the daughter of the house to be working with her. The two ladies began to know each other mutually. Frau Dournay possessed that easy and inherited refinement of mind which gives without seeming to do so; Fräulein Milch possessed that acquired refinement of mind, in which we perceive the toil with which a deeper power of thought has been gained.

The major saw in the distance how the two ladies shook hands with each other, and he spoke the caressing words to Laadi, which he would gladly have addressed to Fräulein Milch: "You are a splendid creature, cleverer than any one else—clear as the day—quiet and solid. Not you, Laadi—why are you looking at me so?"

He came happily back to the garden, Roland and Eric following him. When the major had accompanied the professor's widow some distance on her way home, he stood for some time still, looking after them as they walked away, and then turning his eyes to heaven, he exclaimed: "I thank thee, thou architect of all the worlds. Thou knowest what I want to say—Dub a dub!"

BOOK VIII.

CHAPTER I.

AT every turn it seems as if the mighty rushing Rhine were transformed into a lake, until, rolling round the projecting mountains, it continues its course. It is almost the same with the story we are relating. At the celebration of Goethe's birthday, Clodwig had invited his neighbours at Villa Eden to come to Wolfsgarten. Frau Ceres and Fräulein Perini remained behind.

Eric could not repress a fear as to how he should meet Bella for the first time. She came with Claudine to meet her visitors in the wood, she embraced the professor's widow, and thanked her again for the deprivation she had imposed on herself by leaving Claudine with her; to Eric she held out her hand and said, with rather a fixed look: "You, Captain, were his first thought to-day."

She said nothing more, nor did she plainly mention her husband. Just as they arrived at Wolfsgarten, it began to rain, so they could not leave the house. Prancken was not present; he was staying on the Lower Rhine with an ecclesiastically disposed agriculturist, the so-called convent peasant: for there is nothing now-a-days which does not bear an ecclesias-

tical colouring and distinction. Prancken had at the same time the happiness of being near the convent, for the agriculturist rented the fields of the island and was cultivating them. They were all gathered together on the large hall, the three open balcony doors of which were filled with flowers and creepers, and led to the balcony with its array of beautiful seats.

As they were all sitting quietly together, talking, Clodwig suddenly raised his hand, as if commanding silence; everyone understood. He drew out his watch, and said: "This is the minute at which Goethe was born more than a hundred years ago. Will Bella and Fräulein Dournay—" he added, making a sign to them.

They both understood, and seated themselves at the piano; they played Beethoven's overture to Egmont, arranged as a duet. Bella played with her eyes wide open, and fixed on the page before her. Claudine looked down, and moved her head with an undulating motion while she was playing; there was nothing harsh, it was full of soft harmony.

Towards evening the rain ceased, and the sun set with that indescribable glory of colour which is produced by the rays passing through the rainy atmosphere, and lighting up the burnished hills. They quickly prepared to return home. Roland regretted that his sister Manna could not have shared such a day with them. Clodwig inquired of Sonnenkamp, as he bid him farewell, whether now that the professor's widow was in the house, he would not have his daughter return home. Sonnenkamp expressed himself grateful for the interest which Clodwig showed in his family. He gave his hand to the widow, and said: "If it is agreeable to you, we will go to-morrow together to see my daughter."

Frau Dournay nodded in assent. Sonnenkamp believed in the noble motives of the widow, and for a time he felt himself agreeably touched by them. Soon however the consciousness of his triumphant power rose in his mind; the world favoured his plans, and it was a pleasure to employ men, and to trifle with them, and to use them as stepping-stones. Clodwig and the Professor's widow had made his secret wish for Manna their own; they would now have to be thankful to him for having carried out their desire, and yet they would have to serve his purposes, for it was through them that his main plan was to be accomplished, and not till then would he have the confirmed right to be a being of a higher race, disposing of others, and bestowing his favours on them.

On the very evening of their return, Sonnenkamp determined that the gardener should bring Manna's favourite flowers, especially mignonette, into her room on the following day.

Complaisance and respect were manifested in the manner in which Sonnenkamp gave his hand to Frau Dournay, when she alighted from the carriage, in the way in which he conducted her to the steamer, and sought out a seat for her protected from draught, and affording an open prospect, in the manner in which he placed everything within her reach, and inquired after her wishes. He sat down beside her, and his voice was really agitated as he said that he considered his children happy, indeed almost enviable, to be associated so intimately with such a woman. The more he spoke, the more affected he became; there was a brightness in his eye, as if a tear had melted there. He repeated that he did not speak of his own youth, which was desolate and waste, and with no tender woman's hand to smooth

it. At length, with a violent effort at composure, he came to the point he was aiming at.

"My child has been informed of a fact, which I consider it beneath my dignity to refute. Should it, honoured lady, ever reach your ears, be convinced beforehand that it is a lie, devised by the basest malevolence."

He said he could not enter into it here, or he should become furious on the vessel. His soft manner suddenly became wild and terrible. Frau Dournay said she should first pay a visit to her friend the Lady Superior, and she begged that Herr Sonnenkamp would avoid everything which could force his daughter into connexion with herself. Sonnenkamp agreed that he would not go with her to the island; he would wait in the hotel on the other side of the river, till Frau Dournay sent for him.

As the vessel went down the Rhine, a distinguished looking husbandman in becoming attire was ploughing a field on the convent island. The children were standing in the distance watching the ploughing, as if it were a wonder; they wanted to go nearer, and looked at Manna to see if she permitted it, and Manna nodded, and they went along the gravel walk by the side of the field. The ploughman looked up and raised his hat; Manna started. Was it not Herr von Prancken? He went on quietly ploughing. When he turned the plough, he looked at her and smiled. It was he.

"That is a wonderfully handsome peasant," said one of the girls.

"And he looks so refined," exclaimed another.

"And he wears a signet ring on his finger," cried a third. "Who knows? he may be a knight in disguise."

Manna called the children, and turned back with them. She went into her cell, which looked over the field, but she avoided the window. It flattered her that Prancken should keep near her, and be so modest and considerate as not to accost her. She turned it over in her mind, whether she ought not to tell the Lady Superior, but she decided that she had no business to reveal the secrets of Herr von Prancken.

She went to the window and watched how quietly he went on with his work; he seemed so pure and noble in this simple employment. A rose stood on her window-sill, and one late rose was in bloom. As Prancken now looked up, she seized the rose, and was on the point of breaking it off and throwing it down to him as a sign of recognition, but just as she held the stalk, a sister entered, and announced a visitor, who wished to speak to Manna. The rose was left on its stem. Manna turned round, and felt how confused she was. There was Prancken, he was still ploughing. How could he have announced himself? Or had Countess Bella arrived? With tottering steps she went down into the parlour. The Lady Superior introduced a lady to her, and said: "This is my friend, Frau Dournay, the mother of your brother's tutor."

The first glimpse which the widow and Manna had of each other was a surprise; each had had a different idea of the other. Manna remembered Eric's tall figure, his resemblance to the picture of St. Antony, and now there stood before her a small fair lady, with hair inclined to grey. The mother on the other hand had pictured Roland's handsome sister, and she saw a graceful and refined-looking girl, but at first sight she left no impression of beauty. Her complexion was

rather dark, and her brown eyes sparkled with a calm fire that kindled those that met them.

Manna bowed very formally to the widow, who held out her hand with maternal familiarity, saying that it was a pleasure to her in visiting her friend the Lady Superior, to be able also to make the acquaintance of the daughter of her host. She laid special stress on the fact that she was on intimate terms with Manna's mother.

"Is my mother well?" asked Manna. Her hushed voice sounded affectionate and agreeable.

The widow gave her a good account of her, and was able to add that the doctor said that Frau Ceres had never been so constantly cheerful as she was just now.

"If you have any special message for Manna," said the Lady Superior, "I will leave you alone."

"I have no special message."

Manna took her leave; she held out her hand to Frau Dournay, and went away. She knew not what had happened to her. Why had they sent for her, when they had scarcely anything to communicate to her? It seemed to her beneath her dignity that the stranger should have sent her thus here and there—for this lady was a stranger. But as she sauntered back through the long gallery, she saw for ever before her the true-hearted mild countenance of the stranger, and she smiled at herself, as if she was thinking, what a strange child I am!

Manna returned thoughtfully to her cell; she looked out of the window; Prancken was getting into a boat with his horse, and was landed on the other side. He hurried quickly up the bank, and disappeared among the willows. Manna longed for the time when the world should be taken from her, and no restless feel-

ings should any more come over her, for she felt just now deeply disturbed. There was Prancken, there was the mother of the tutor—what did it all mean? She took out her book of devotion; but it did not succeed, she could not divert her thoughts from the subjects that occupied them. Frau Dournay meanwhile sat with the Lady Superior. In appearance, as well as in deportment, the two ladies presented a strong contrast.

The figure of the widow was comfortable, and there was an expression of attentive animation in her face, and her hands were round and plump. The Lady Superior was thin, tall, and upright, the expression of her face was grave and severe, just as if a second before she had issued some strict order, or was about to issue one, her hands were long and refined-looking. Both women had had a past life of trial; the Professor's widow had gained from it a mild and almost smiling contentment; the Lady Superior, on the contrary, had gained from it a sense of constant preparation for whatever might betide. At the first greeting of the two friends after a separation of nearly thirty years, the Lady Superior seemed either not to have heard, or not to intend to hear, that the Professor's widow called her by the familiar name as of old.

"I had not imagined that I should have seen you again on this side the grave," she said; and when the widow tried to awaken youthful remembrances, the Lady Superior replied that she knew of no past, that she only knew of a future, and that it was the only thing which had the right to engage our thoughts.

The Lady Superior remarked that her words astonished her former friend, and she said, with the same repose of manner, that she made no difference

with the relations and acquaintances of the past; that no one was more dear to her than another, and that any one who could not act thus ought not to devote herself to a religious life.

Frau Dournay was composed enough to say—"You had always a strong mind; it used sometimes to frighten me, but now I admire it."

The Lady Superior smiled; but as if angry that she felt flattered by this politeness, she added—

"I beg you not to seduce me to vanity. I stand at my post, and keep strict watch till my Lord calls me. At that time, I must say it, I did not know that you and I lived in two different worlds; in my world one's duty is to have no power of oneself."

With all her self-denial, it seemed to the Professor's widow as if the Lady Superior spoke of the power and greatness of the circle in which she stood, with that pride, or at least with that exalted self-reliance, which easily attaches itself to those who belong to a narrow and powerful community.

Soon, however, both ladies found a subject of mutual interest, as they discussed the difficult task of educating the young. The Lady Superior mentioned what a strange being Manna was—that there were two natures in her, one humbly submissive, almost without a will, and the other combative, defiant, and self-willed. She had a serious character, perhaps too serious for a girl of seventeen, yet often she could not moderate her feelings—but who could do so at her age? Her heart was burdened with a sorrow which was inexplicable; it might be supposed that it arose from the fact that the child deeply felt the discord between her parents. She asked the Professor's widow some particulars respecting the peculiarities of the

parents, but the widow answered evasively. The Lady Superior mentioned further, that Manna atfirst had had a difficult position in the convent—in fact, her entrance had almost caused a revolution. Two American girls of good family were also here, and they would not sit at the same table with the quadroon, for as such they regarded Manna; they told their schoolfellows that negroes and creoles in their country always had separate carriages on the railway, and special places were assigned to them in church. By her quickness of comprehension and great eagerness, Manna had soon contrived to receive even the blue riband.

Frau Dournay would gladly have told the Lady Superior that it was her duty to show the children, by word and action, that there is no distinction of race in the sight of God, and that this exclusiveness is both wicked and barbarous. She repressed the remark. She did not wish for a discussion; she was a guest, and she did not desire to convert or to improve. The Lady Superior, however, continued—

"Do you know anything more unhappy than a girl who knows, and respecting whom others know, that she is an heiress of millions? Can she believe in the love of perishable men? Is she to believe that she is wooed for her own sake? There is nothing left for it but to give herself and her possessions into the hand of the Eternal. We do not sue for Manna, and for her large future possessions, we insist on her returning to the world, and returning to us from her own free resolve. We neither compel nor suggest; still it is our duty to protect those, whoever they may be, who prefer the imperishable to the perishable; and now let us speak no more on the subject."

The Lady Superior went away. Frau Dournay

strolled alone on the island, and it seemed to her a hazard—in fact, an unjustifiable act of boldness—to wish to take away the child who lived here in peace, and who desired to attach herself to it for ever.

She stood on the bank, and, almost without knowing why, she allowed herself to be ferried across, and she was not a little astonished to see Herr Sonnenkamp and Herr von Prancken sitting over their wine under the shady lime trees of the hotel. Prancken wore a strange attire, so much so, that she fancied she was mistaken; she was on the point of turning back, when they called to her, and she joined the two men in the garden. Sonnenkamp was very cheerful; he praised the chance which had thrown his friend Prancken in his way; he thought it capital that the Baron should for a time turn peasant; he intimated that he had once been so also, and said—"We have no concealment before our friend. Frau Dournay, will Manna return home with you?"

Frau Dournay replied that not a word had been spoken on the subject, nor could it even be desired; Manna ought to be allowed to complete her time, and any violent interference was to be guarded against.

Prancken agreed. Sonnenkamp, however, was very indignant; he considered it revolting that his child should live here penned up, while a free existence was open to her.

The mid-day bell of the convent sounded, and Frau Dournay said that she must return. Sonnenkamp accompanied her to the shore, and there said softly to her—"Do not trouble about Prancken. My child shall have liberty in every respect."

The widow ferried across to the island; the children were already seated at dinner when she entered the

refectory. When they had eaten and returned thanks, the Lady Superior said to Manna—"Now go with the friend of your family."

The widow went with Manna to the shady wood at the other end of the island. Little Homebird went also, and was confiding to the mother; the child sat down with a book under a tree, and promised to wait until they fetched her again.

"You must not take Manna away with you," cried the child from her low seat; they were both startled, for the child spoke from a natural impulse—what one feared and the other hoped.

"You seem to me to have a vocation for a higher life," said Frau Dournay, "for you must have seen sorrow even in early youth, and must have been initiated into the discord of human life."

"I ?—how ?" asked Manna. She trembled.

"You have suffered under that terrible evil which is the stain of your great and noble country."

"My country ? I ? Speak more plainly."

"It pains me to touch a wound, but this wound is an honour to you, and you have been innocently exposed to the discord of life."

"I ? Tell me all that you know."

"I think it must intensify your sensitiveness, that in your own person you have had to endure this baseness of feeling."

"Tell me plainly, if you please, what you know."

There lay a tone of asperity in the manner in which Manna angrily uttered the words, and her soft eyes had an unearthly glare.

"I know nothing more than at your entrance into the convent you had a good deal to endure, as two Americans looked upon you as a creole, and would not associate with you."

"Yes, yes. Now I know why Anna Solway often said she could tell by the eyes and nails any one who had negro blood in them. I thank thee, Great God, that Thou hast allowed me to endure this. Now I understand why I was the victim. I myself—I myself am to endure the ignominy of being examined as a slave. But why, oh God, dost Thou suffer that they should worship Thee, and yet insult Thee in thy creatures? So it is not because I wish to be religious and obedient, but because I am of pure blood, that they have tolerated me here?"

She clasped Frau Dournay's hand, and asked—

"Did you not tell me that you had my mother's special confidence?"

"Yes."

"And has she told you—has she told you that other thing?"

"I do not understand you."

"Speak openly with me. I know everything."

"Your mother has not told me any secret."

Manna convulsively grasped the cross on her bosom, and looked fixedly before her without speaking. With the utmost warmth Frau Dournay expressed her regret for having thus agitated Manna. The latter still made no reply. She sat down on a seat, which was placed under a fir-tree, and leaning against the fir-tree and looking up to heaven, she said to herself: "Why does no voice come through the air to us? Ah, I would gladly hear it, I would follow it over mountain and valley, through night and death." She wept. The widow begged her to calm herself, but Manna declared she could not, that it pained her so that they should take her away from here, and yet she must go, for she could no longer be true here, as people had not been true towards her.

Now, for the first time, Frau Dournay discovered to her alarm, that Manna had not known what had occurred; she said she could never forgive herself for having thus disturbed Manna's young heart. And now Manna turned to her and endeavoured to quiet her and to console her.

"Believe me," she cried, and she raised to her her folded hands, "alas, I know, that the truth alone makes free, and that is the terrible thing that the park and the house and the splendour are all a lie—No, I did not mean that. Only one thing I beg, do not regret that you have told me; it does no harm, it helps me; it really helps me. I ought to have known it also, and it is well."

Frau Dournay saw how bitterly the girl felt it, and she explained that the Lady Superior had healed like a physician, without telling the sick person his full malady. The widow then informed her that her father was waiting for her on the opposite side of the river, and that he hoped his child would return home with him.

"Come with me to the Lady Superior," said Manna suddenly. She took the widow's hand and they went together to the convent. Little Homebird now joined them, and called out: "No, Manna, you must not go away; you must not leave me here all alone."

"Come with me," replied Manna, and she took the child's hand. She went to the Lady Superior and begged permission to go with Frau Dournay to see her father, who was waiting for her on the opposite side of the river.

"Let him come here then."

"No, I would rather go to him."

Permission was given. But it was difficult to soothe little Homebird and to loosen her hold. Manna accom-

panied Frau Dournay into the garden of the hotel; in the shade of the shrubbery Sonnenkamp was still sitting with Prancken.

"Will you go home with us?" cried Sonnenkamp, rising to meet his daughter.

She permitted his embrace, but did not respond to it. Prancken was delighted to see Manna, and when she held out her hand to him, he said smiling: "My hand has grown hard, but my heart is still soft, perhaps too soft."

There was a freshness in his appearance and a bright tone in his words; he saw, not without satisfaction, the impression his manner made upon Manna. The latter at length said that she thought she might venture to speak openly, and that she had in reality a desire at once to leave the convent, or still better, never again to return to it; she begged her father or Frau Dournay to ferry across and to bid farewell for her, and, if it were possible, to bring little Homebird away with them.

"May a friend be allowed to say a word?" asked Prancken, as Sonnenkamp was expressing his delight.

Manna begged him to speak, and he then declared that as a friend, he cared that she should act correctly. Whatever had occurred, it was still Manna's duty, not to sunder rudely such a pure and warm link as had bound her to the convent and especially to the Lady Superior; hardness and ingratitude, exercised towards others, left bitterness and sorrow behind. He thought, therefore, that as Manna was leaving the convent of her own free will, she should leave it in kindness and friendliness. It seemed to him better that she should return and stay for some time, and then with calm consideration separate herself from her companions and pious sisters. He repeated that he could desire nothing

so much as that Manna should return as soon as possible and enter fully into busy life, but that it was the duty of a friend to spare any one who was dear to him, all subsequent repentance and inner disquietude.

There was more than a distinguished bearing, there was a nobleness in the manner in which Prancken said this.

"You are right," exclaimed Manna, giving her hand to Prancken and holding his firmly. "I thank you and will obey you."

Sonnenkamp was beside himself that his darling wish was again frustrated; but Frau Dournay was also of the same opinion.

The two ladies, accompanied by the gentlemen, walked down to the river and ferried across to the island. Little Homebird, who had wept unceasingly, had already gone to bed, lamenting that Manna had gone; she went to the child and found her crying, and the pillow was wet; she dried her eyes and talked to her till she fell asleep.

Until late in the evening, Manna was walking up and down the broad walk on the island, between the Lady Superior and Frau Dournay, and holding a hand of each. It was as if two powers of the world were affectionately contending for her.

The Lady Superior had fixed ideas on most subjects.

Frau Dournay regretted that she had undertaken such a mission. Still now she was at the post and she must defend her position; she brought forward the point upon which she could be quite true, and told Manna that her father wished to organize an extensive system of charity, and depicted to her what a noble vocation it would be to be able to assist in it. The Lady Superior allowed Manna to reply, and she said:

"Women cannot influence on a large scale, and the bounties which my father distributes, seldom fall into the right hands; we can only give back the property again into the hand of him who alone can decide to what end it may be employed."

The Lady Superior repeated that she decidedly dissuaded Manna from taking the veil; it was to be feared that her disposition was not fitted for it. Turning to Frau Dournay she added in a bitter tone: "We are indifferent as to the reproach we may have incurred of having striven for the property of the child; we do not disdain possessions, for we can do great things with them, but it is the soul alone of the child upon which we place importance, and we ask not whether worldlings believe it of us or no."

Frau Dournay was glad when she was at last alone in the cell in which she was to sleep. They were very early awake in the convent, but long before the bell for matins sounded, Frau Dournay was ready dressed in her cell, looking out at the dawning day, as the mist over the river struggled with the morning twilight. She reflected on the hundreds of young souls, still asleep, progressing towards a doubtful future; she thought of the nuns, who had renounced life, to whom the daylight could no longer bring any personal event, nothing but constant duty.

Dare any one venture to influence such a life and to disturb it? Though much that is unsuitable may happen in a convent, still one sacred will sways every mind. We can only oppose a positive existing religion by greater religion. In the world the idea of purity is persecuted, ridiculed, ignored; the hand must be consecrated to higher and more certain aims, if it would venture to attack the asylum of such an idea. The

morning light had been victorious over the mist, and it shone over the hills and on the river; the convent-bell sounded; and the large house became full of life.

Frau Dournay waited till the morning service was finished, then she went into the refectory to take leave of Manna and the Lady Superior. They accompanied her to the river-side. She had a sense of freedom as she ferried across.

As she journeyed back with Sonnenkamp to the villa she sketched on the steamer a plan for organising an extensive system of benevolence; something comprehensive must be contrived, so that Manna might pass from the one sanctuary into another.

Sonnenkamp listened silently, but unwillingly; the whole world had combined to make him a sanctified hypocrite. A similar thing had been required of him yesterday, by Prancken; he had laid a stress on his religious duty. Sonnenkamp had shrugged his shoulders when the man had held a mask before him. It was not till Prancken had added that the court would thus not only be justified in awarding him, but also bound to award him his elevation to rank, that he had assented. And now here was Frau Dournay with the same thing, and it was well, for her intentions were probably honourable.

The journey home was less lively, for they came empty back, indeed Sonnenkamp was angry that he should again have done what was required without having obtained anything.

CHAPTER II.

A NEW mind had meanwhile appeared at Villa Eden.

On the morning after the departure of Frau Dournay, Roland had gone to the little vine-covered house to fetch a book for Eric from the library. As if he longed to see how it looked without the mother, he went into her empty room, and on her table lay an open volume, and on the fly-leaf there was written in English: "To my friend, Dournay.—Theodore Parker."

Roland started. This man's name had been mentioned to him by the mother a few days before. He took the book, brought it to Eric, and begged that he might read it. Eric was perplexed, but after a little reflection he gave Roland the book.

Roland sat under the tall willows on the bank, and read and read—he gazed occasionally at the river, and read again. Here was a champion, an enthusiastic, God-honouring champion for free morality, and against slavery. He prophesied a great struggle, and the words "all the great deeds of man are written with blood" fell like a spark of fire into the mind of the youth. He read further and further, till he observed that the light was waning and that night was coming on. His cheeks glowed as he came to Eric and gave him back the book.

Roland had enjoyed the forbidden fruit of the tree

of knowledge, and Eric was struck to see how deeply it had all penetrated into the mind of the youth. A new and difficult task lay before him; the youth must be restrained from all communication with his father.

Eric sat with Roland till the night was far advanced; he felt that he must divert him from his just view of things, and this was almost the hardest task that he had undertaken in his new position. The youth was to be made to see that there was a view which upheld slavery as justifiable and necessary; he was never to let his father know that he held opposite opinions, and had been made acquainted, through Frau Dournay, with a mind which might not be mentioned in this house.

"A big negro has had me in his arms," said the youth. "I remember it quite well; I can remember his woolly hair which I pulled; he had quite a smooth face, and no beard." Half dreamily he continued, "I have been carried by negroes—by negroes."

More and more softly he repeated the word, and then was silent. Suddenly he passed his hand across his forehead and asked, "Do people, who are slaves, love their children? Do you know any song that they sing?"

Eric had but little to say in reply; Roland wanted to know what bygone ages had thought of slavery. Eric could only give him superficial information.

Far into the night Eric was writing a letter to Professor Einsiedel; he explained to his fatherly friend that it had lately dawned upon him that two powers were wrestling in man, that ruling and serving were historical and natural laws; he expressed his intention of writing a history of slavery in all ages, and he begged his master to specify to him some suitable works on the subject. When Eric, accompanied by Roland, was

taking the letter to Professor Einsiedel to the railway on the following day, they saw the steamer approaching, in which were Sonnenkamp and Frau Dournay; they signed to them, and went towards the landing-place. Sonnenkamp walked first with Eric; he seemed out of humour. Roland kept Frau Dournay behind, so that there was some distance between them and the others, and then he asked, "Did Manna tell you that she was Iphigenia?"

"No."

The widow pressed her lips together; she divined something, she understood, now, Manna's lament that she had been obliged to endure the terrible lot in herself. Roland told her he had been reading the book which she had forgotten. Frau Dournay was startled at the announcement, but she became quieter again when Roland added that Eric had explained it all to him, and that he would keep the secret. Nevertheless, she was full of fear when she returned to the villa; she had brought a spirit there, which might not abide there. She had kept it concealed, but it had now asserted its influence in a way over which she had no control, and which might suddenly produce alarm and confusion. She visited Fräulein Milch on the first opportunity. The latter was her first coadjutor in organizing plans of benevolence. She knew every one and the respective circumstances of each, and she desired, in the first place, that a dozen sewing-machines should be given to the adjacent villages, and she would herself instruct the women and girls in the use of them.

Accompanied by the major and Fräulein Milch, Frau Dournay returned to the villa. She was calm, and a sentence of Goëthe's sounded in her mind as though it were sung, "Not by reflection, dost thou know what thou art, but by endeavouring to do thy duty."

Then she laid before Herr Sonnenkamp the plan she had sketched with Fräulein Milch. He agreed to it with readiness, and the idea of the sewing-machines seemed to give him special satisfaction. They were not only something American, but they would be a subject for talk. He travelled himself to the capital and bought the machines.

The newspapers contained laudatory remarks respecting Herr Sonnenkamp's efforts for the welfare of the people. The privy counsellor's wife came and congratulated him as to the result, adding that her husband had told her that this conduct on the part of Herr Sonnenkamp had been remarked in the highest circles. Sonnenkamp was full of eagerness, he would not let the public voice rest, he wished that it should talk of him daily; but Prancken, who had come on a visit, said that it was better to pause a little and then to give a fresh surprise.

A road along the beautiful meadows by the riverside had been designed, extending from the villa to the vine-covered cottage, and one day Sonnenkamp begged Frau Dournay to accompany him there. Much to her astonishment she found all her furniture and her husband's library well arranged in the cottage. Tante Claudine was also again there. With a certain degree of pride Sonnenkamp introduced his valet Joseph, who had arranged all so beautifully. Eric received a large packet of books and a letter from Professor Einsiedel, with a paper of notes. He praised Eric for wishing to write a treatise on the idea and nature of slavery, and said it was a rich subject.

The son of the privy counsellor, the cadet, was at home at the newly gained villa on furlough, and he stimulated Roland with the desire to enter the service.

Roland was now only intent on entering the higher class as soon as possible; he spoke of it to his father and Prancken. But his father took him aside and said: "My child! it is well, and it gives me pleasure to see you preparing yourself so eagerly, and you shall enter as soon as—I honour you, while I tell it you—I consider you mature enough."

He paused, and Roland asked: "When am I then to enter?"

"You shall enter as soon as you are ennobled."

"I ennobled? And you too?"

"Yes, all of us; for your sake I must gain rank, you will understand that later. Should you like to be noble?"

"Do you know, father, when I first felt respect for rank?"

Sonnenkamp looked inquiringly at him, and Roland continued: "At the railway station, where I saw a crazy and intoxicated man, every one held him in respect, because he was a baron. It is a grand thing to be a noble."

He related the incident on the morning of his flight, and Sonnenkamp was astonished at the effect upon Roland, and at the thoughts he entertained. Then he said: "Now give me your hand, and promise not to tell Herr Eric anything about it, until I tell him myself."

Roland gave his hand hesitatingly. His father proceeded to explain to him how disagreeable it would be, to enter the military school as a commoner, and while there to be admitted to rank. Roland inquired why he was not to tell Eric about it. His father withheld his reasons, and required implicit obedience. Thus Roland had a double secret to keep, one from his father and one from Eric; it oppressed the boy's mind,

and there was a strange expression in his manner when he one day asked Eric: "Are there noblemen among the negroes?"

"There are no noblemen in the abstract," replied Eric: "individuals are only noble in rank, so long as others choose to regard them as such."

Fires had been begun at the Villa, and Sonnenkamp's arrangement that each stove should have its special chimney, had been tested. But it was a fête when Frau Dournay's fire was lighted for the first time; Eric, and Roland, and Fräulein Milch had come, and so they sat together round the hearth; one can scarcely say what animated them all, but they were satisfied and at ease in their hearts.

The mother encouraged Eric to read aloud to them on the winter evenings some of their favourite poets. Eric declared himself willing to do so, and with almost unbroken regularity, Eric had read aloud one evening in the week. The demeanour of his auditors was very different. The major sat listening with devotion, and kept his hands folded; Frau Ceres leaned back in her chair, opening her eyes occasionally to show that she was not asleep; Fräulein Perini had some work at which she continued without ever betraying the slightest emotion. Frau Dournay and Claudine sat quietly and listened. Sonnenkamp begged once for all that they would excuse his bad behaviour. And so he sat cutting wooden pegs. Sometimes he looked up, holding the knife in one hand and the wood in the other, and stared fixedly; but he quickly returned to his work.

Roland placed himself always so immediately in front of Eric, that the latter seemed addressing him, and often far into the night he would talk over what

he had heard. Once when Eric had been reading Goethe's "Iphigenia," Roland said: "I never understand, why Manna told me that she was Iphigenia; then I should be Orestes. I, Orestes? Why? What could Manna have meant by it?"

One evening, when the pastor and the doctor had been present, the latter begged that Eric would read aloud Shakespeare's "Othello." Sonnenkamp looked confusedly at the doctor, but he quickly gave a forced smile and joined in the request. Eric looked at Roland. Would not Roland's slumbering investigations respecting the negroes be now reawakened? He did not like to refuse to read the play, and he had no ground to allege for dismissing Roland. Eric read. The richness and flexibility of his voice gave every character its full value, though he kept within the boundary that separates reading from acting; it was not an imitation of life, it was rather a sculptured work which does not produce the colour, but exhibits the pure form. The doctor nodded to the widow, Eric's style of reading seemed to suit him.

For the first time Frau Ceres listened with intense attention; she did not lean back the whole evening, she bent forward, and her countenance wore a new and unwonted expression. Eric went on reading without stopping, and when he reached the close, and in a voice struggling with emotion, read Othello's weeping confession, large tears ran down Frau Ceres' pale face.

The piece was finished. Frau Ceres rose quickly and begged Frau Dournay to accompany her to her room. Fräulein Perini and Claudine left with them. The gentlemen rose, Roland alone remained sitting as if he were rooted to the spot. Sonnenkamp looked at his wood-cutting, and gathered all the chips together in a

heap, as if they were gold dust; indeed, he bent down to pick up some that had fallen to the ground. Then he drew himself up and asked Eric: "What do you think of Desdemona's guilt?"

"Guilt and innocence," replied Eric, "do not belong to nature, they are the result of human, social, moral laws; nature knows only the free play of her powers, and Shakespeare's poems are second nature, for they represent the free play of the natural powers of man."

"You are right," interposed the pastor. "In this work there is no mention of religion; religion must soften and bend the wild natural man, and bring him under the sway, or rather under the subjection, of the higher laws revealed to us."

"Right, very right," said Sonnenkamp, who had grown pale, "but permit me to beg the captain to answer my question."

"I can only answer your question," replied Eric, "in the words of our greatest æsthetic writer, who once said jestingly with regard to moral explanations: 'The poet wished to characterize a lion, and in order to characterize a lion, he depicted it as tearing a lamb to pieces. There is no question as to the guilt of the lamb, the lion must act in accordance with its nature.' But I think the most tragical part of this drama is unexpressed and veiled."

"And what is that?"

"Only the motherless, sisterless Desdemona, bred up as she had been among men, could have loved a hero, whose love-craving, child-like and insinuating nature, couched like a tame lion at her feet. The poet's tact is wonderfully prophetic. 'It is contrary to nature!' exclaims Desdemona's father, and that is the solution of the whole problem. In these words all happiness

ceases, and the result is the same as in any natural production."

"Then you, the idealist, understand the conflict here depicted, in a thoroughly physiological manner?" interposed the doctor.

Eric replied: "Races are different, but all are ethically alike. If you lay stress on a difference of race, as producing a moral difference, then this were no tragedy, for the tragic element exists only between those who are morally alike, and not between beings of a higher and lower species. The yielding character of the girl who does not deny her wildness, forms the source of a love which forgets everything, even overcoming difference of race, and effacing a dark complexion."

Sonnenkamp, who with restless fingers had been playing with the splinters of wood, now threw the whole heap on the floor, and going up to Eric, he held out both hands to him, and exclaimed: "You are a free man, a free thinker, unbiassed by the arts of chicanery. You are the only man who has explained the matter to me thoroughly. Yes, so it is. It is contrary to nature! Apes by their own reasoning, yes, degraded to apes are those silly advocates of humanity, who, with little experience, form general ideas and demands, and who do not know those artful creatures who are never to be humanized, though they are endowed with speech. Ho! ho! you noble philanthropist!" he exclaimed, walking up and down the room. "Give your daughter to a negro. Do it, do it! Fear every moment that he will tear your child to pieces! Fondle a black grandchild! Do so, noble philanthropist! Then come again, and talk of the equality of the black and white races!"

Never had the gentlemen heard Sonnenkamp speak

thus. He had clenched his fist, as if against an enemy whom he was strangling. With a forced smile he repeated again that Eric had hit the point. A white girl could not be the wife of a negro; it was not prejudice, but the law of nature.

The gentlemen looked at each other with astonishment; and with a bashfulness not usual to him, the doctor said that, in a physiological point of view, he could agree with much that had been said, for it was well known that creoles became extinct in the third generation. Then turning to the clergyman, he added that independence of races did not exclude human rights, any more than it did the human duties, which religion imposed upon all alike. Religion ought to be free, and it had grown into the church. The pastor found himself obliged to confess that the negro understood all religious convictions and creeds, and that this gave him all the rights of man.

"Really?" exclaimed Sonnenkamp, "indeed? Then why did not the church ordain the abolition of slavery?"

"Because the church," replied the pastor, calmly, "has nothing of the kind to ordain. The church addresses herself to the eternal soul, and teaches it to prepare for heaven. The social position occupied by the body in which the soul abides, cannot be ruled or determined by us; neither slavery nor freedom is a hindrance to a godly life. Our Lord and Master called the souls of the Jews to enter the kingdom of Heaven, while they were under Roman bondage. He called all nations through his apostles, never asking what was their political constitution or social position. That is left to others to regulate. Our kingdom is the kingdom of souls, who are all alike, whether they dwell in white or black bodies, in a republic, or under tyrannical

rule. We hail it with joy, when the body is also free, but to procure this liberty is not our office."

"Theodore Parker conceives it otherwise," interposed Roland suddenly.

As if a shot had passed by his head, Sonnenkamp exclaimed: "How do you know of the man? Who has told you of him?"

Roland trembled visibly, as his father seized him by both his shoulders.

"Father," he cried, in a manly voice, "I too have a free soul. I am your son, but my soul is free!"

Sonnenkamp drew his breath with agitation, but suddenly he said: "I am glad, my son; that is good, that is noble; you are a true American boy. It is right!"

This sudden turning hither and thither on the part of Sonnenkamp, disconcerted all present. But Sonnenkamp continued in a gentle tone: "I am glad that you do not allow yourself to be daunted. You have courage. Now tell me, how have you become acquainted with Parker's writings?"

Roland related truly how it had occurred.

"Why did you not tell me of it?" asked his father.

"I can keep things to myself," replied Roland, "that is why you have confided something to me."

"You are right, my son, you justify my confidence."

"It is late, we must be going home," said the Major at length, and the whole party broke up.

At no dangerous outpost, in no furious battle, had the Major felt his heart beat so quickly as during the reading, and still more when the conversation took such a perilous turn. He had shaken his heavy head, and had stretched out his hands as if imploring help and averting evil, and as if he longed to say to them

all, "For God's sake leave off this conversation! It is not right, it only leads to mischief." Then he would look again at Sonnenkamp, and shrug his shoulders. What right had the man to defy us in this way? We have put nothing in his way, and he ought not to touch on these things. Oh, how right had Fräulein Milch been when she had begged him to stay at home to-day. How comfortable it would be in his arm-chair where Laadi was now lying; he would have been asleep a couple of hours ago, and now it would be midnight before he got home, and Fräulein Milch always waited till he got home. It was like a deliverance to him when he took out his watch and could show how late it was. Frau Dournay came in at this moment, and told Roland to go to his mother.

The gentlemen set out on their way home, and Eric accompanied his aunt and mother through the snow to their cottage.

They walked on for some time in silence. High above from the mountain ridge they heard the harbinger of intense cold; the eagle owl uttered its screech in those dreadful tones, which, as they rise and fall, have something in them plaintive, and yet maliciously triumphant. All three stood still. Eric said that Sonnenkamp had taken a good deal of trouble to get rid of the owls out of the neighbourhood, but he had not succeeded.

In moments of agitated feeling, everything becomes a token and a presage. Scarcely breathing out the words, the mother said that Frau Ceres' excitement was inconceivable to her; that she had thrown herself on her neck, and had wept and sobbed. They all three felt that the life in Villa Eden had reached a climax.

Eric returned to the Villa. The owl had flown down from the mountain ridge; it was now sitting on the top of a tree in the park, and was sending forth its wild screech through the air. Eric heard it, and Sonnenkamp heard it, as he was waiting in the anteroom of his wife's sleeping apartment, until his son came out. His presence had been declined, while his wife was speaking with Roland. At last Roland came, and his father asked what his mother had said; he had never done such a thing before, now he felt compelled to do so. Roland replied that his mother had only kissed him, and had then begged him to hold her hand until she fell asleep, and that she was now sleeping quietly.

Sonnenkamp desired Roland to give him that book of Parker's, but Roland said it was no longer in his possession, and that Frau Dournay had reproved him for having taken it without permission. Roland went into Eric's room, but the latter was not there.

The owl was still screeching from the tree in the park. Roland put out the light and opened the window; and taking his rifle from the wall, he fired, and the owl fell from the tree. Roland hastened down, and meeting Eric, he told him that he had hit the bird; he hurried on towards the park and brought it back. The whole house was in alarm; Frau Ceres was awoke, and her first exclamation was: "Has he killed himself?"

Sonnenkamp and Roland were obliged to go again into her room to show themselves to her. Roland took the dead bird with him, but his mother would not look at it, and only complained that they had disturbed her sleep. Father and son went away again, and Sonnenkamp praised Roland for having brought down the bird

so quickly and surely. Eric went again to his mother, who must also have been aroused from sleep; he found her still awake; she too had feared that the shot had been that of a suicide. The excitement which prevailed throughout the whole house, was only gradually calmed.

Proud of having shot the owl, Roland forgot everything else; he went happily to bed and soon fell asleep.

But above in the turret-room, and below in Sonnenkamp's work-room, a light was long burning, and Eric sat staring at the flame, as wonderful fancies flitted through his mind. He thought of the play he had read, of all the people who had listened to it, and above all of Roland, and it seemed to him a good thing that the love of sport should drive away all bitter reflections and speculations from the boy's mind. One act, one act alone brings freedom. Where is it, this great and all-redeeming act? It was not to be fathomed.

There is a great ruling power in life and in the God who influences it, independent of all will and all reflection. The act is not ours, but to be prepared, that belongs to us. At length Eric found repose.

Sonnenkamp walked up and down his large apartment like a prisoner. The lion's skin, with its stuffed head and glaring eyes, stared at him; he pushed the lower end of the skin over the head. Again and again he thought what he had best do. Eric was training his son into an enemy, and Frau Dournay, who, as Prancken said, was always conjuring up the ghost of her husband, the deceased Professor Hamlet—no, she was a noble woman. But why had he encumbered himself with this learned beggar family, inflated as they were with their own ideas? He could not now shake them off, without attracting attention. No, he

would use them, and then cast them from him. A happy resolve at last quieted him. He decided that they must enter into new relations, into diversions, and press forward at once to the goal. The day after to-morrow is new year's-day, he thought, and we will all move to the capital. In this idea, Sonnenkamp also found repose at last.

The next morning Eric expected that Sonnenkamp would send for him. The man had yesterday given vent to such heterogeneous opinions, that some explanation seemed necessary. He heard steps approaching his room, they were the steps of two persons, it was Roland coming with his father; he held his father's hand, and said it had been decided that they should go all together to the capital and pass the winter there. Sonnenkamp added, that he hoped Eric would now not withdraw himself from their social circle, and he remarked by the way that in the capital they would meet Count Clodwig and his amiable wife.

Eric answered briefly, that he now felt himself bound to accompany Roland and the family. When Sonnenkamp, however, expressed his hope that Frau Dournay would also move to the capital, Eric replied that he did not think his mother would be induced to settle elsewhere.

Sonnenkamp behaved with extreme politeness, for he was always glad when he could play the hypocrite; whenever he could make a fool of the world, he felt animated and pleased. He was in such a good humour, that he said to Eric: "I hope to convert you also. You will learn to see that one lives best in the world, when one maintains one's position as a stranger in it, and cares but little about the State systems."

"To a certain extent," replied Eric in a jesting tone,

"Aristotle agrees with you; he lived for the most part in Athens, where he, so to speak, had a certificate of residence and was not a citizen of the place, where he could be free from all active and passive right of election and could live in accordance with his own ideas."

"That delights me. One always hears something new and sensible of the old philosophers. So Aristotle was also a traveller? Good!"

Sonnenkamp's face wore a very cheerful expression. Scholars are convenient, he thought, they are sure to find great historical reasons for actions that are either selfish or thoughtless. He smiled pleasantly, and his smile remained, though Eric declared that what suited a philosopher like Aristotle, could not be applied to every one, for if every one lived in that way, the world could not exist; who would be found then to undertake social or political offices? He is a strange fellow, this German schoolmaster—thought Sonnenkamp to himself—even in the midst of the surprise of a journey, he is ready with his learning. He requested Eric and Roland to prepare for their departure, and as a servant brought the announcement that his mistress wished to speak with Herr Sonnenkamp, he quitted the room. He went into the apartment of Frau Ceres, who looked at him wearily; he expressed his pleasure that she was well again, and able to undertake the journey to the capital on the following day. In alluring colours he depicted to her the pleasant life in the capital, and the society they would enjoy with the privy counsellor's family, with Count Wolfsgarten and his wife, and also with the family of Herr von Endlich. With encouraging confidence, he added: "Be strong and agreeable, my beautiful Frau Ceres, and you shall return to these apartments as a baroness."

Frau Ceres raised herself up, and only regretted that the dresses that had been ordered in Paris had not yet arrived. Sonnenkamp promised to telegraph for them at once, and he also promised that Frau Dournay should accompany them, that they might have the benefit of her instructions. The day was clear—a fresh, cold, bright winter's day, in which every tree and every rock in the landscape stands out sharply from the blue sky; the Rhine was frozen, and a wonderful stillness, like that of an undrawn breath, lay over the whole scene.

Sonnenkamp was glad that the bright day had scared away all the ghosts of the preceding night and that a new life was before him. He despatched orders at once to the stable, that a pair of horses and a second carriage should be taken to the capital. When he went an hour afterwards with Roland and Eric to the green cottage, they saw the horses, covered with warm cloths, on their way to the capital.

Frau Dournay's large room looked like a market; large packets of knitted and woven woollen clothes for men and women were lying on the tables and chairs; and Fräulein Milch was reading from a long piece of paper, on which stood the names of the poor and the things that each was to receive. The mother and aunt were portioning the well-arranged packets. When this was done, Fräulein Milch called in the gamekeeper with his wife and daughter, and the Seven Pipers with all his children. They were instructed to deliver the packets to those whose names they bore. With the last packet, Fräulein Milch also took her departure.

As they sat in the now emptied room, Sonnenkamp informed the widow of his plan for removing to the capital, and begged her to accompany the family. Gratefully, but decidedly, Frau Dournay declined

doing so, and Sonnenkamp found it difficult to command his temper when he perceived that no arguments could make her waver in her decision. Courteous, but out of humour, he quitted the house, and Roland promised to leave Frau Dournay Griffin, as a watch-dog. Frau Dournay had promised to go to the villa that evening, that they might wait up together for the midnight hour of the last night of the old year.

When she arrived, she saw large black chests at the entrance-hall; in Frau Ceres' reception-room dresses were lying on every chair, and Frau Ceres, happy as a child, was arranging everything with an activity such as she had never before exhibited. When they at length repaired to the dining-room, where tea was prepared, every one felt that an important stage of events had arrived. While the conversation generally flowed easily, and the hour was never thought of, on this evening it seemed an effort to wait for midnight. Frau Dournay felt the strain; they were really even now no longer here, no longer together; she spoke, therefore, more than she really wished, and related her own entrance into the great world.

When the clock struck twelve, Sonnenkamp kissed his son; Frau Ceres kissed the widow, then she bent her head, and awaited quietly a kiss on her forehead from her husband. Outside the bells were ringing, and guns were firing. "Hail to the new year!—to new life!" exclaimed Eric, as he grasped the hand of his pupil.

Shots were fired quite close to the villa, and Sonnenkamp was much annoyed that the good German police should allow it; it was nothing but vulgar barbarism.

Eric, on the contrary, remarked—"In a psycho-

logical point of view we can find an expression of joy in this otherwise disagreeable firing. Without knowing it, the insignificant man who fires a pistol, feels a pleasant surprise in producing an effect so widely diffused as to render his act observed by many. This seems the explanation of this barbarous custom; it is an augmentation of the human voice, and of the shout of exultation."

Sonnenkamp smiled, and bid Eric and Roland a cheerful good-night. Wrapped in fur, and accompanied by two servants, the widow and Claudine returned to the green cottage. Everything was soon hushed, and they were dreaming in the new year.

On the next morning, when Eric and Roland went to bid farewell to the inmates of the cottage, a message came from Fräulein Milch, inviting herself and the Major to dinner with Frau Dournay. The widow remarked to Claudine the delicate tact of their friend, who probably imagined that they would be feeling lonely. It snowed unceasingly, and, standing at the window, the mother greeted her son and Roland as they drove past in the first carriage, and then Herr Sonnenkamp and Fräulein Perini, who nodded from the second carriage; Frau Ceres was lying back in one corner, covered with wraps, and she did not move.

The Major presently arrived, and Fräulein Milch with him. The Major always held himself in a strict military manner, and allowed no illness to relax his upright bearing; he was a little hoarse to-day, and could not therefore speak even as much as usual; but he expressed formal good wishes to both Frau Dournay and the aunt, with great cordiality. "This year," he said, "it will be fifty years that we have known each other."

He pointed to Fräulein Milch, and his whole expression implied—"A better being than she is does not exist." They were a cheerful party at table, and Fräulein Milch remarked what universal pleasure the presents had given. The Major forced himself to master his indisposition, for he wished to be agreeable to the three ladies, and he complimented the Professor's widow for not only being learned, but also for being able to make such excellent soup.

After dinner Frau Dournay declared that the Major must have his usual nap; she had had the library warmed for this very purpose, and the Major was not a little proud of sleeping in the Professor's arm-chair.

"Yes," he said, "I can sleep as well as the best Professor. But all these books—all these books! It is frightful that a man must read so many books! I do not know how it is possible!"

The Major slept the sleep of the just; but he would have had no rest had he had an idea of what was now going on among the ladies. Fräulein Milch was sitting at the window with Frau Dournay, and the latter was astonished when the simple house-wife remarked how inconceivable it was for Eric to have read aloud that agitating play of Othello, when there were so many points in it which could scarcely be touched upon in that house.

"Do you know the play?" asked Frau Dournay.

"Oh, that I do!" replied Fräulein Milch, blushing up to the border of her cap.

"Do you think, then, that it was unsuitable to read the piece, because Herr Sonnenkamp was a slave-holder?"

"Excuse me, I must say no more," replied Fräulein Milch. "I do not like to speak of Herr Sonnenkamp;

I am glad—no, that is not the right word—I am satisfied that he scarcely notices me, and always treats me slightingly. I am not angry with him—I am rather thankful—for then I am not obliged to assume friendliness towards him."

"No, you must not evade my question in this way. Can you not tell me why you thought it unsuitable? Both my son and I ought to know in what circumstances we are placed."

"I cannot," replied Fräulein Milch, plaintively.

Claudine, who seemed to remark that Fräulein Milch had something to say which she perhaps ought not to hear, went softly away.

"Now," said the Professor's widow—"now that we are quite alone, you can tell me everything. Shall I give you an assurance that I can keep a secret?"

"Oh! I can only reproach myself for having gone so far," stammered Fräulein Milch, drawing her cap-strings through her fingers. "Since the Major and I have been together, it is the first time I have ever paid a visit or dined out. I ought not to have done it." Her face exhibited emotion, and her brown eyes sparkled.

"I think you may regard me as a friend," said the widow, holding out her hand to her.

"Yes, that you are!" exclaimed Fräulein Milch, seizing the extended hand in both her own, and holding it firmly. "You cannot know how I thank God that He has granted me your friendship. Since I devoted myself to Him, I have renounced every one else; you are the first person with whom I should like to live. Oh! I feel as if you must know it all—there is nothing to tell you."

"I do not know all. What do you know of Herr Sonnenkamp?"

Fräulein Milch bent down her head sadly; then she put both her hands before her face, and exclaimed—

"Why must I say it?"

She drew nearer, and in a soft and scarcely audible voice, she communicated to Frau Dournay some facts respecting Sonnenkamp's life. Frau Dournay supported herself with both her hands on the sewing-machine which stood before her. Not a word was spoken. Everything was silent outside, nothing but the cry of a flock of ravens hovering over the frozen Rhine was to be heard.

"I think," said the Professor's widow at length, "you would not tell me such things upon mere rumour. Go a step further, and tell me openly how do you know it?"

Fräulein Milch looked round fearfully, and said—

"I have it from a most credible man, whose nephew is educating a child here in the country; he knows the name which Herr Sonnenkamp used to bear—in fact, he knows his whole past history. But dear, noble lady, why cannot a man begin, as he has done, another life—a new existence?"

"We will talk of that another time," said the widow. "Tell me the name of the man who has conmunicated all this to you."

"Be it so. It is Herr Weidmann."

The widow covered her face with both her hands.

"What are you saying of Herr Weidmann?" asked the Major, suddenly coming in. "I tell you, dear lady, he who does not know that man, does not know the truest being upon earth. He is a masterpiece of God's work, in which God Himself must have taken pleasure; every day when He looks down from heaven, He must say to Himself, the world after all is not so bad, for

yonder there I have my Weidmann, and he is a man, a true man. That expresses everything, there is nothing surpassing it."

The two ladies felt themselves released by the entrance of the Major. He now started with Fräulein Milch on their way home. When they had gone a few steps, the widow called Fräulein Milch back again and asked in a whisper: "Does the Major also know ?"

"Oh, no; he could not endure it. Oh, pray forgive me for having burdened you thus. Believe me, my own mind is not the lighter for it; no, only the heavier."

The guests went away, and Frau Dournay passed into the library and stood there looking out of the window. It was as if something was gnawing her very vitals. In spite of all her repugnance to it she had entered into this connection, and her clear, sensible judgment had seemed for a time darkened.

There was a roaring and rumbling noise on the river, a hissing and cracking, as if a new world was opening; the ice-coating had broken. Great lumps of ice were floating along the stream, knocking against each other, tumbling over each other, cracking, shivering to pieces, forming anew, and floating on. Every lump, large and small, was surrounded with a circle of splinters, broken off in the concussion; the lumps rushed quickly down the stream; at such times it became apparent how swift and strong the current was. The sun set like fire over the Rhine, and half aloud the widow said to herself: "This first day of the year has brought me terrible trouble. It must be endured, and must be led to good."

BOOK IX.

CHAPTER I.

A LINE of cabs were standing in front of the Hotel Victoria in the capital, sparrows were swarming round the vehicles, and the coachmen were gathering in groups together, stepping backwards and forwards for the cold, beating their arms across their breasts, and carrying on mutual jests. The sparrows were quarrelling, for they found no more food and they flew away. The cabmen were silent, for they had nothing more to talk about. What could they talk about on a winter afternoon in the snowy empty streets of the capital? Everything was as mute as the late prince standing on the great column, chiselled in stone, with a cap of snow on his head and epaulettes of snow on his shoulders. The shutters were closed in the casino opposite, for cards are better played by candle-light. The relieve-guard came from the palace of Prince Leonhard, the soldiers wore large cloaks and unfingered gloves on their hands. The relieved guard whispered something to his successor, probably not a matter of much importance. A chancery clerk passed by with a packet of deeds: he met a court lacquey, dressed in a long coat reaching almost to the ground; they exchanged a pinch of snuff and passed on. Take heed,

however, now. There was something happening. There was a movement among the coachmen, and the courier Lutz drove up with the large baggage waggon. There was subject now for conversation. It was true, the "Ingot of gold, the king of California," was coming to the capital. "Run up to your father, the bell-ringer, and let him ring all the bells," exclaimed one. "Let me have a drink that I may shout a good hurrah," said another. "Now begins the merry winter. The Ingot spends more than three princes and seventeen counts and seven barons to boot." "I'll tell you something," continued a third. "When he comes, we will send a deputation to him, he'll do it, it's just after his fashion. I have a plan." "Out with your plan."

The man thus addressed—a small humpbacked man, with cunning eyes—made his comrades wait a little, and then he said: "We will request Herr Sonnenkamp to give every cabman daily a pint of wine; you'll see, he'll do it. If I had sixty millions of money, I would do it too."

A somewhat starved-looking cabman said: "I have been an innkeeper, I know what it is. The host of the Victoria is getting a winter tenant who will keep his house warm."

In the hotel itself, there were none but pleasant faces. The pretty hostess was to-day prettier than ever, again and again she reviewed the splendid suite of rooms on the first floor and saw that all was good; here and there a cover was still spread, but not a footstep of the waiters and maids was to be heard on the double carpet as they went up and down; and the magnificent silk furniture, the grey covering of which had been laid aside, shone as though it were thankful to be allowed to see the light.

Lutz was in his element; now from this, now from that chair, now from a sofa, and now from a causeuse! he seemed to be testing every seat in the apartment! he decided that this or that must be placed differently; he seemed inclined even to try the double beds, but he satisfied himself with pressing down the feathers a little. A boudoir with blue silk hangings and a pretty bow-window was skilfully re-arranged by him. The evening came on and the landing was filled with flowers, and the whole suite of rooms was lighted up, all the lights of the chandeliers, and on the tables and brackets; they might arrive now at any moment.

With a cigarette in his mouth, the head-waiter walked in front of the house and contemplated with pleasure the long row of lighted windows; with double pleasure he looked across the road to the "Hereditary Prince," where all was dark and desolate, and enjoyed the annoyance they must be feeling. A carriage came with the servants, male and female, and soon after another carriage with Eric and Roland, and at last a carriage with four horses drove up. Bertram pulled in the horses, and Herr Sonnenkamp alighted, assisting first of all Fräulein Perini, and then Frau Ceres, who was enveloped in the most costly furs.

The cabmen in front of the house forgot their agreement and raised no hurrah for Sonnenkamp; mutely he entered the vestibule with his family, the great bearded porter standing there in his laced coat and broad hat, holding his silver-headed stick; firmly, as if he were a statue, the man stood there, only his eyes sparkled. They passed through the heated and lighted apartments and up the flower-adorned stairs. Sonnenkamp cast a satisfied glance around him. Frau Ceres was not in a good humour, for she had slept almost the

whole way; sitting by the fire-side, she allowed her furs to be removed by degrees.

Sonnenkamp inspected all the rooms and when he returned to his wife's boudoir, Frau Ceres was still sitting motionless on a low easy chair in front of the fire.

"What shall we do to-day?" she asked, yawning.

"There would still be time to go to the theatre."

"To change my dress? I will not do it."

Fortunately the wife of the privy counsellor was announced, Herr Sonnenkamp having previously informed her of his arrival.

"Most welcome," was the general greeting, and indeed she was so. She apologized for not having been waiting for her dear friends and neighbours in their apartments, as had been her intention, but she had been detained by a visit from the Countess Graben. They thanked her and were delighted at her great complaisance. Eric and Roland were summoned to the drawing-room, as the cadet had also come.

"Where is your mother?" asked the privy counsellor's wife. "She will of course follow?"

Eric did not answer and Sonnenkamp quickly interposed, that the professor's widow would not relinquish her quiet country life.

"It will cause general regret," said the privy counsellor's wife in so cheerful a tone that it seemed as if she were saying something especially amusing. "Our friends have looked forward with pleasure to the idea of seeing the amiable, witty, and universally respected lady among them again for one season."

"She must follow," said Frau Ceres.

Sonnenkamp was out of humour. Did the splendour of his house rest only in this woman? His ill-humour increased when the privy counsellor's wife said in a

whispered conversation with him that the plan would be much more tardy and difficult to carry out without the professor's widow. She promised not to relax her own efforts, but she added that she could not even remotely do what one of the Busy-body family could effect. It seemed to Sonnenkamp as if the lights in the reception-room burned more darkly; he was, however, sufficiently master of himself not to manifest his ill-humour.

The privy counsellor's wife had a good deal to tell, as to who had given entertainments, and from whom they were to be expected; and various piquant stories were related from the chronicle of scandal in the presence of the children. The eldest son of Herr von Endlich, the splendour of whose house was famous, was also shortly to be betrothed; they were only afraid that it might be postponed by tidings of death from Madeira, whither the young couple had gone, whose wedding had taken place in the summer. The cadet begged Roland to go to the theatre with him as a great ballet was to be given there. Eric looked perplexed at Sonnenkamp, but he said: "Yes, you may go, Roland."

For the first time Eric saw his pupil taken from him to an amusement, and entering a circle whither he did not accompany him. Roland had begged that Eric might go too, but the cadet declared that there were no more places to be had; he had only with great difficulty reserved one for his friend. And so Roland went away, saying to Eric as he left him: "As soon as it is over I will come to you."

Eric grew calmer; he could not, indeed, prevent Roland from imbibing views and falling into society, which threatened to divert him from his present noble tendencies. He must trust that Roland had strength

and conscience sufficient to resist dangers. For some time Eric wandered about in the silent, small, and empty capital. He knew every street and every house; here and there resided the companions of his youth, and families with which he had been intimate; he knew not in what position he should now stand to them. He came past the large building in which the antiques were placed; for a moment the thought flashed across his mind, how it would have been, had he received the position of director there.

As he reached the main street he fell in with a crowd of people and carriages from the theatre, the performance was at an end. He hastened to the hotel, for he wished Roland to find him at home. He waited in his room, but Roland did not come; he went into the drawing-room, but he was not there. The privy counsellor's wife remarked with a smile that that they need not be anxious; Roland was in Cuno's society and of course amusing himself thoroughly. She apologized, but said that she must also now leave them. Sonnenkamp accompanied the lady to her carriage, and returning to the apartment he said to Eric: "I had expected that Roland would have proved more reliable; in spite of his promise he is not here."

Eric was on the point of replying that it was really not his fault, for his father had given him permission this very first evening, when he had scarcely alighted from the carriage, to go his own way. He restrained himself, however, from saying so, for a discussion was fruitless.

"I cannot go to bed till he is here," moaned Frau Ceres.

"Do you, perhaps, know where we can look for him?" said Sonnenkamp, turning to Eric.

"It is not necessary, he is here," replied Eric.

Roland entered. The mother complained and the father scolded that he had not kept his word, but Roland said: "I deserve neither complaints nor scolding; it has cost me a great deal of trouble to get away from the party whom I accompanied to the restaurant, and then left them."

All was now right again and they retired to rest.

"Why do you not ask me how I liked the theatre?" said Roland when he reached his room.

"I wished to wait till you told me of yourself."

"Oh, it was very beautiful; exquisite girls danced, and Cuno knew them all by name, and had something to say of each; still it was rather tedious. For hours there was nothing but skipping and moving, and not a word with it. It occurred to me what Benjamin Franklin would say if he saw it, and then all the fun of it was spoilt. Cuno says I am a snob, and I let that pass quietly; but when he added something else, I was very near having a duel with him."

"May I know what he said besides?"

"It concerns you, but—it may, indeed, be indifferent to you."

"Stay, do not say it. I do not care to know what people say of me; it troubles one's mind and does not help one to be better. But you have acted capitally, you can sleep well, you have stood fire for the first time. Be always true to yourself and to me."

With a happy mind Eric laid down, and with a happy mind Roland fell asleep. In a large close carriage, with two servants wrapped in fur on the box, and another behind, Sonnenkamp drove on the following morning with Frau Ceres about the town. It had been a matter of serious consideration whether Roland should also leave cards; at length it had been decided in favour of his doing so.

The privy counsellor, his wife, and his two daughters had been invited to dinner. The Paris dresses had arrived. Owing to the small size of the capital, this circumstance had afforded general conversation, for the custom-house officers had told their wives and these had told their friends, that dresses had arrived superior to those even of the princess; the dresses were admired by the ladies, and everything seemed successful. Sonnenkamp had arranged a whist-party in one of the best club-houses, to which the privy counsellor had introduced him, and when they rose from table, Bella and her husband presented themselves as their first visitors.

Bella was extremely lively, though she expressed her regret to Eric that his mother had remained in the country. She told Herr Sonnenkamp that Otto was expected in a few days, and also Prince Valerian; both had parts assigned them in a French comedy which the court were going to act. Clodwig seemed tired, and he begged them to make but few demands upon him socially. Both houses of parliament were assembled. The prince's brother, Prince Leonhard, was appointed president of the chamber of nobles; Clodwig was vice-president, but he had almost all the work to do of a real president.

While they were together an invitation to a large party arrived from Herr von Endlich, and Bella could not help saying that rumour asserted that Herr von Endlich was giving his great fête at once, in order not to be prevented by the tidings of his son-in-law's death. The Sonnenkamps had just come in time; they were in the midst of the season. It was said that the court would be present at Herr von Endlich's, at any rate the prince's brother might be expected there, for he

kept up a connexion with society outside the palace. Bella also admired the Paris dresses in the adjoining room, but she advised Frau Ceres to reserve the most splendid of all for the party which Herr Sonnenkamp would give himself.

The evening at Herr von Endlich's was full of enjoyment. The *beau monde,* although annoyed at the jest which the Prince had practised in elevating the rich wine-merchant to rank, flocked to his party in great numbers. The Prince saw his mistake, for it was entirely against his usual habit, as he liked to treat court matters with a kind of priest-like sanctity, and he was glad whenever his mistake was overlooked. Any one could win his special favour by being polite to Herr von Endlich. And so it happened that the parties of the new noble were perhaps the most brilliant of the season.

Herr von Endlich was wise enough to invite numbers of members of Parliament, and even two of the fiercest opposition, although, of course, not without having previously asked the court if it was agreeable. The court itself did not come, but Prince Leonhard appeared. He had, it is true, made no secret of his objection to the elevation of his host; as his brother's subject, however, he went to the party, and conversed for a long time with the opposition members, especially with Herr Weidmann, who was President of the Lower House. The Prince represented his brothers, of whom he always spoke with great submissiveness; he did not, however, dislike it when it was said to him—"Ah, if you were at the head of things, how different it would all be—our land would be a model land." In the court circles there was always a silent pity felt for Prince Leonhard, because he ventured to hold Liberal

views, or sided with the mob, as they called it. The Prince promoted arts and sciences, and indeed, to a certain extent, the political movement; there was a newspaper said to be secretly supported by him, and this newspaper was slightly on the opposition side.

Arm-in-arm with Clodwig, Prince Leonhard walked through the rooms. Clodwig must have spoken of Eric, for the latter, who was not standing in the first row of those who were waiting to be recognized, was called to by the Prince, who said aloud—"Dear Dournay, I am glad to see you again. You are a great scholar, are you not? You had always a talent for it—even in childhood it was apparent. How is your honourable mother?"

Eric thanked him politely, and in the expression of his words there was a tone of satisfaction, that the first meeting with Prince Leonhard should have been so cordial. It was not a small matter when the Prince said—"Bring Herr Sonnenkamp to me. Where is he?"

Sonnenkamp was unfortunately not to be found; he was in the smoking-room. He was called; but it was now too late, for the Prince was opening the ball with Bella. Herr von Endlich looked radiant with happiness, but Sonnenkamp's face wore a strange expression as they told him that the Prince had requested Captain Dournay to introduce him.

Sonnenkamp seemed to himself for the first time in his life like a schoolboy. He was standing near a group to whom Herr von Endlich was explaining the preparation of cast-steel, when the Prince came up; the conversation suddenly stopped short, but the Prince said—"Pray do not let me disturb you." He listened with pleasure as Herr von Endlich explained the manufacture of cast-steel, as if he had all his life

been the manager of a manufactory. Sonnenkamp was introduced, and the Prince asked if he had pursued the cultivation of grapes before in America. Sonnenkamp answered in the negative. Without any previous introduction to the subject, the Prince then asked again if he had known Theodore Parker, whom he had heard preach with a great deal of pleasure. To this also Sonnenkamp was obliged unfortunately to reply in the negative.

The Prince was endeavouring to bring him upon some subject in which he was at home, so he asked whether he thought the slave question would have a peaceful issue. The bystanders listened attentively as Sonnenkamp stated that the monstrous things represented had really no existence in reality, and that the abolitionists meant perhaps well, but certainly carried out their plans badly.

"You must explain this to me some day more fully; you must come and visit me."

"Your highness has only to command," replied Sonnenkamp; he was very glad that the conversation ended here.

Eric stood almost the whole evening near Weidmann, but gladly as he would have devoted himself to a man held in such universal honour, it was not possible; he was involuntarily watching Bella. There was something Juno-like in her appearance; she had a certain stately ease, and looked proud and confident, bestowing a lighter word on some, and a more thoughtful word on others; she animated those who were old, and enlivened the young, and this in the noblest and most unapproachable manner.

She hovered from one to another; on her lips there lay sometimes an expression of power, but she dis-

pensed a pleasant smile, and her agreeableness was fascinating; she was a riddle, nevertheless, even as regards appearance, for no one could tell accurately what colour her eyes were, although every one was enchanted with their lustre. While she listened, she moved her fan always to and fro, and then spoke with finished ease. But, without apparent reason, her features often assumed a gloomy and wild expression; there was something mysterious in her. Bella was a woman whom one could hate, but never forget. Doctor Richard had experienced this, and Eric felt that he had been unjust to her, for the mainspring in Bella's character was ambition, and this ambition aimed at great things, and appeared as greatness. In the idea that he had done Bella wrong, he was more polite and respectful towards her. Bella seemed to feel what was passing in Eric's mind; at every meeting she nodded to him graciously and meaningly. Eric's behaviour quieted her perfectly, for in her heart she had often thought: "What if a tutor like that should boast! Bah! no one would believe him. But he is too noble to boast. And what had happened, after all?"

Whole evenings passed, and Eric scarcely saw his pupil, for he was always surrounded by the dancers, who favoured him and petted him. With his coat covered with cotillon ribands, Roland came late home, and was weary and absent in the morning; and Eric remarked that the porter occasionally conveyed to him, in secret, scented notes. There was no longer any idea of regular instruction; Roland was humming for the most part all day the dances of the night before. He kept his dancing cards secretly stored up in his desk, and many other remembrances

with them, and his face wore an expression of reserve.

Prancken was glad to find his belongings—for so he called the Sonnenkamps—in the midst of society; and now it happened that a part was also assigned to Roland in the French comedy. He was to be a page at the court of Louis XIV., as the young Countess Ottersweier, to whom the part had been awarded, was ill of measles. A beautiful dress was ordered for Roland, and all his thoughts were now fixed on the play and the rehearsals.

When the first dress rehearsal took place, and Roland appeared in the becoming costume—a close-fitting white silk dress—his family were full of admiration; and his mother could scarcely restrain her expression of delight. Roland looked at Eric, whose face was grave and sad; he was on the point of asking him why he was so pedantic—for this was what his fellow-actors had called him—but he repressed it, and said—"Rely upon it I will afterwards learn again all you give me to learn, only now let us be merry."

Eric smiled sadly; he felt that his pupil was being ruined: but what could he do? The thought passed through his mind that he would withdraw now that everything which he had laboured so to plant and cultivate in the boy was being trampled under foot; it was only the reflection that Roland would then be wholly ruined, that kept him at his post. He thought it his duty to acquaint Herr Sonnenkamp with his fears; but the latter consoled him by saying that youths in America were early mature and battling with life, while German youths were still sitting on the school-bench, grieving over some slight reproof.

On the evening before the acting of the French

play, Roland, at the desire of his father and Prancken, had invited all his fellow-actors to an evening party at the hotel. The gentlemen alone appeared; there were no other ladies but Bella. Bella took Sonnenkamp aside, and told him in confidence that he would only get ladies to frequent his parties when he had the Professor's widow there. She confessed herself that on her return to the country she should feel a kind of shame in the presence of Frau Dournay, with whom she had often spoken of the emptiness and nothingness of social diversions; it was better, therefore, that all should be in the whirl, so that no one should have to fear the reproachful look of another. Besides, it was perfectly true that Sonnenkamp would not gain a social position until the Professor's widow represented his house.

Bella was malicious enough to tell Sonnenkamp that the privy counsellor's wife made use of him, and denied his acquaintance in society, and spoke of her connexion with him as merely obligatory and neighbourly. Sonnenkamp was furious, but he was obliged to preserve the most courteous manner.

The play was acted. All were full of admiration at Roland's grace and beauty; even Bella, who had the opportunity of displaying her versatile talent—having a part with three different disguises assigned to her—was quite thrown into the shade by the impression which Roland produced.

The princess sent for Roland, and conversed for some time with him; Roland and she were seen laughing together. The prince came himself to Sonnenkamp and his wife and congratulated them on their magnificent son, asking when Roland was to enter the military academy.

"When he has the rank your highness may graciously bestow on him," was Sonnenkamp's composed answer.

The prince looked stern, and walked away. Sonnenkamp breathed quickly, he had evidently committed an error in bringing the matter forward then and in that manner; however, it was not to be undone, and forwards was the watchword. He looked round angrily as if he could have grasped the whole company with all their tinsel and moulded them together, and made out of them what he chose. His ill-humour was not lessened, for Prancken came up and asked what he had said to the prince, as the prince seemed annoyed. Sonnenkamp did not think it necessary to acknowledge his error.

With a saddened look Eric watched it all. He stood leaning against a pillar, and by his side was a beautiful palm tree, the fanned leaves of which were drooping wearily. He gazed at the plant, it was withering in this oppressive atmosphere, in this blaze of gaslight; it may be brought back again to the spot where it had thriven, but it would be sickly, and probably wither entirely. Would it be the same with Roland? How was he to strive after an ideal, after higher things, when he had passed through all this splendonr and all this admiration?

Roland came to him and said: "The princess wishes that I should be photographed in this dress; all the ladies wish it, and all the actors are to do the same. Is not that nice?"

"Certainly, it will be a pleasant remembrance for you in the future."

"In the future! Oh, to-day is so pleasant. I do not wish to think of the future! Oh, if we were only

not obliged to sleep, and undress and be different to-morrow! I should like to go on uninterruptedly living like this."

Eric saw how completely Roland was intoxicated with praise and honour; now was not the time to contradict him.

On the following day, while Roland was with his companions at the photographer's, and the invitation cards for the great Sonnenkamp fête were being carried round, Sonnenkamp himself, accompanied only by Lutz, drove to Villa Eden.

CHAPTER II.

THE professor's widow was sitting in her comfortably-heated room by the window, the sill of which was covered with cushions, or with moss outside, to protect from all draught, for a hard frost had again set in. She was sitting at her sewing-machine, which went so smoothly, that the noise was scarcely heard. The cracking and shifting of the lumps of ice on the river were audible, as they came into contact with each other, and then floated away in an altered form. She was thinking of Sonnenkamp's life and character and past history, and above all of the reasons for Manna's state of feeling. She fancied she could understand what Manna had meant when she had said to Roland on her departure from her parent's house, "I am also an Iphigenia." She was now repeating to herself while she worked, that song of the Fates in Goethe's drama, and her mind was pondering over the enigma why children must suffer for the guilt of their parents.

In the midst of the melodious but passionate verses, she heard the sound of a carriage stopping at the house. It was probably the doctor, who occasionally gave her an hour of his society; she knew he liked her to remain undisturbed. The approaching footstep was however not his, the knock at the door was not his, and in walked Herr Sonnenkamp.

The professor's widow had never seen Sonnenkamp since she had heard that which she could never tell him, and she required all her composure to offer him her hand. He took off his fur glove, and seized her hand. For the first time she felt the steel ring on his thumb, as if it were a cold snake. She started as she saw her hand in his. Sonnenkamp's hand, broad, fleshy, with fingers bent back, and the flesh growing over the nails, was like the hand of the Pharisee in Titian's picture of the Tribute Money. The Pharisee holds the coin between his thumb and forefinger, and this action has in it, if we may venture to say so, something of violence and hypocrisy. It flashed across Frau Dournay's memory, how she had stood in the Dresden gallery on her wedding tour. Her husband had for a second concealed the countenance of Christ and that of the Pharisee, and had made his wife look only at the formation of the two hands, which indicated the figure and character of those who owned them. The thought flashed like lightning through her mind.

Sonnenkamp observed that Frau Dournay was unusually agitated, and he said with readiness: "I have always found that thoughtful people, people living much within themselves, and above all ladies, are not fond of surprises; I must therefore beg to apologize."

The widow looked at him. How was it possible that a man with such a past should conceive such tender feelings, and exhibit them with such gentleness? She confessed that he was right in his conjecture, and asked whether his visit was on her account, or for the sake of looking after his affairs at home. She fancied that this was an awkward question, but no other suggested itself.

"My visit concerns you alone," said Sonnenkamp,

"and I almost regret that I am disturbing this charming repose. I come, alas, from a whirl of engagements, where one can scarcely imagine that there is such repose on our planet."

He then proceeded straight to his object. With great submissiveness he begged Frau Dournay to give his house the dignity which she alone could impart to it. The widow regretted that she felt obliged to refuse; she was no longer fit for society.

"I should not have thought that you had a gloomy view of life, I should far rather have imagined that you took a freer view of things."

"I think I do. I do not regard life as a gloomy charitable institution, from which all cheerfulness is to be banished; youth is to dance, and not to think meanwhile that at that very moment human beings are shivering with cold, and that there is sorrow and misery everywhere. I love cheerfulness, it alone gives strength."

"Well then, come to our help; we will afterwards devote ourselves all the more to our poor brethren of the great human family."

Frau Dournay was obliged to struggle against her indignation that the man should thus play with these words; she stared at his hands, as though they were blood-stained, and these blood-stained hands were offering her the wine of joy. She could scarcely speak, she only shook her head and repeated:

"I cannot, believe me, I cannot."

"Well, then," began Sonnenkamp, "I must not hesitate to acquaint you with a secret."

The widow supported herself with both her hands against her work-table. What was the man going to say? Sonnenkamp declared that it was his unceasing

wish and that it was necessary for his wife, for Roland, and for Manna, that he should be raised to rank.

Frau Dournay started. How? Could this man venture it? The feeling of her hereditary nobility rose within her. Could this man with such a past venture upon such an act?

Sonnenkamp looked at her with intense attention. Something was at work in the woman's mind which he could not explain; she was silent, she spoke not a word in reply to such marks of confidence.

"Why do you not answer me?" he asked at length.

Frau Dournay composed herself and said: "Would it not be difficult to you to bear another name?"

Sonnenkamp looked at her keenly; she continued: "It was strange to me even as a wife to bear another name."

"Pardon me," replied Sonnenkamp courteously; "you were compelled to bear that of a commoner; it is probably easier to adopt that of a noble." He begged her still more urgently, and added Countess Bella's especial wish. The Professor's widow remained firm; no one, not even those linked to her by the closest ties of friendship, could influence her life; she had resolved not again to enter into society. Sonnenkamp imagined that Frau Dournay did not like to appear as an appendage; but that if she were placed in a free and independent position, she would no longer decline. In a manner both humble and forcible he told her, therefore, that he would now place in her hands a sum of money, which would render her independent for life; and as he spoke, he put his hand in his waistcoat pocket and took out a pocket-book.

"Pray do not," interposed the widow, blushing deeply; she looked at his hand—the Pharisee had held

the piece of money just in the same manner—"Pray do not. It is not that. I am not ashamed of my position, for I have my honour in myself; nor am I afraid of the emotion I might feel at the sight of the circumstances of others. I have renounced these interests for ever. I regret deeply to be obliged to beg you to bring forward no other inducement, as my mind is fixed on the subject."

Sonnenkamp felt embarrassed, as to how he should convey the pocket-book back to his pocket and restrain his violent indignation. He got up and went to the window. For a few moments he looked out, then he turned smilingly round, and said: "The blocks of ice are floating along, a mild breath of air has broken asunder the coating of ice, and why should it not also, my honoured friend—allow me to call you so—soften your intention, your resolve—you understand what I mean—we must not fetter the course of things."

"For myself," replied Frau Dournay, "it would be a breach of fidelity, and I have nothing more in the world than fidelity towards myself."

"I admire you," responded Sonnenkamp, thinking still, perhaps, to win her over by the acknowledgment of his respectful admiration.

The widow felt that she must do something for this poor though rich man, that she must give him something to afford him happiness, and the words came from her very heart, as she said: "Let me express to you the thanks of the hundreds whom you have fed and nourished. It makes me happy to be the messenger of your bounty, and I only desire that you may feel yourself as the source of blessing."

Sonnenkamp gazed at her, and uttered these words: "It is all good—good—I thank you."

He again held out his hand to her and went away. At the door of the house he was met by Fräulein Milch, but he scarcely looked at her and went on.

Fräulein Milch found the widow, washing her hands with eagerness, as if she could not purify them from the contact. Fräulein Milch asked: "Has he told you that he has been raised to rank?"

Frau Dournay looked at her with astonishment. How did this simple housewife in her seclusion know everything? Fräulein Milch declared that the butcher from the capital, who had bought a couple of fat oxen from her neighbour, had spread the report.

As Sonnenkamp entered his grounds he felt as if a phantom had mastered him. What power was this which had thus fascinated him and made him forget himself?

"I am still myself! I have still a will! Nothing has ever yet escaped me that I have desired, and they shall all serve my ends!" he said aloud to himself.

He looked at the trees in the garden, a slight hoar frost lay on the branches, it was a sight so pure and beautiful and everything was so free from motion, that he involuntarily held his breath, for it all looked so still, so glorious and so bright; he only wished that he could exhibit them in his intended party before the astonished eyes of his guests.

Yes! his guests! Would they come? Would this pompously announced fête be a cause of shame to him? The branches of the fruit-trees were to be trained and bent at will, why were men so refractory? Suddenly he laughed to himself. There was a good deal said of a great female singer in Paris who was delighting everyone; she must come, cost what it might, and she must pledge herself to give no public concert, but only to sing

in his saloon, or, at the most, before the court. He would offer something to the paltry society of the capital, which no one but he could do.

Sonnenkamp immediately ordered his carriage and drove to the telegraph station, and sent a message to an agent in Paris with the accurate statement of what he required. The answer was to be sent to him at the capital. With fresh courage, despising the whole world and proud of his power of invention, he drove back to the capital. Prancken was present when he received the intelligence in the evening, that the singer would come. Sonnenkamp wished that the unusual entertainment he had to offer, should be quickly known; it should be announced in the court journal. Prancken was not in favour of this kind of announcement, it would be better in his idea to communicate it confidentially to one and another, and then each would hasten to spread the secret entrusted to him. He himself undertook to convey the startling intelligence to some of his intimate comrades in the military casino.

The singer came, and exercised a greater power of attraction than Frau Dournay could have done.

On the evening before the fête Bella appeared, bringing her good wishes for its success.

Nothing indeed was wanting. The popular prince was there with his wife, the choicest society filled Herr Sonnenkamp's saloons, even the American consul-general was present with his wife and two daughters, and all were full of admiration of their host. The singer sang many modern things in a bravura style and amid the liveliest applause; and Eric was especially touched when she sang an air from Lulli's opera of Medusa. She accomplished the daring feat of expressing in music a passion surpassing human limitation;

there was a colossal power in it just as in the bust at Wolfsgarten, and he trembled as Bella looked round and her eye turned towards him as though by some magic charm, she guessed that the current of his thoughts was directed towards her. She looked proud and grand, and at the close of this song she went up to the singer and talked to her with eagerness.

Frau Ceres was out of humour, for her great magnificence vanished before the wonderful art of the singer, around whom every one crowded. The Prince conversed with her for full half-an-hour, and with Frau Ceres only for a few minutes. With a triumphant sense of victory, Sonnenkamp passed among the company; his demeanour was humble, but in his heart he was despising them, for, he thought to himself, everything may be got with a handful of gold—honour, and social splendour, and everything may be had for money.

On the following day, two subjects of conversation occupied all in the capital. They spoke of Herr Sonnenkamp's entertainment, which surpassed anything that had been known before; and the other topic was the tidings of the death of Baron von Endlich's son-in-law—tidings which had arrived the evening before, but which had been withheld, in order not to deprive the friends and the numerous relations of the knight marshal of the pleasure of the Sonnenkamps' entertainment. In the evening the paper, which was edited by Professor Crutius, contained a sarcastic article, in which the melancholy tidings and the Sonnenkamp fête were artistically blended together. A part of its splendour was thus effaced, and Sonnenkamp deliberated with Prancken whether the poor devil of an editor was to be won over with a handful

of gold. Prancken opposed the idea; it was impossible to have the slightest connexion with these communists—for so he called all who did not accord with the Government—and the man who scorned no means in his desire for rank, agreed that such an act of bribery would be disgraceful. Sonnenkamp seemed converted, but he turned to Eric, who had once been the medium through which his assistance had reached the man, and begged him to renew his connexion with him, and to assure Doctor Crutius that, if he required help, he was ready to assist him. Eric refused with decision.

The singer was not summoned to the court, for it was thought unsuitable to do so, as she had first sung in a private house; she took her departure, and Sonnenkamp, and his entertainment, and the singing were soon forgotten. Yes, Sonnenkamp had to endure the slight of being passed over in an invitation to court; he now heard that the Prince was unfriendly to him, because on the night of the French play he had awkwardly revealed a matter which required the utmost precaution in its management. Prancken informed him of this with a sort of malicious regret; he intended that Sonnenkamp should know that his elevation to rank was due entirely to himself.

The evening on which the court entertainment took place, and two noble families from the country, who had come to the Hotel Victoria for the purpose, drove from thence to the palace, was painful indeed to Sonnenkamp. He was obliged to restrain his wrath, and to comfort Frau Ceres, who wished that they should take their departure at once; for the very thing upon which she had set her affections was now at an end. Even the privy counsellor's wife remained away, for

to her regret, so she said, she had to appear at court. And so the family sat alone, and on this evening, for the first time, Eric again gained a deeper hold of Roland's heart, for Roland also was thoroughly vexed. The cadet, who was a page, had told him how merry these festivities were.

Eric took occasion from this very circumstance to impress upon Roland that we must seek honour in ourselves, and never in the world. He who makes his honour and his happiness dependent on others, is placed by such dependence in the deepest slavery. Roland listened in silence, but his eyes dilated.

Sonnenkamp had great difficulty in concealing his annoyance in society, and yet he could not venture to allow it to be observed, as this increased the slight received. He smiled silently when the splendid court entertainment was talked of. He was assiduous in his politenesses to the privy counsellor's family, it must keep its ground, it had its reward, and he would not be the deluded one. He determined to throw his son early into the vortex of society; he determined to know what bearing he would assume, and what passions he would display. He made the young cadet a spy over his son; he gave him money; he was to bring Roland into gaming company; he was to entice him to play high, and then to inform him how Roland demeaned himself. Sonnenkamp was not a little astonished when the cadet informed him that Roland absolutely refused to play at all, saying that he had given his word to Eric that he would never be induced to do so, even for apparently small stakes. Sonnenkamp would gladly have expressed to Eric his thanks for this great power over his son; but he thought it better to act as if he did not know of it.

When Bella came to fetch Eric to go with her, as he had promised, to the cabinet of antique models, Sonnenkamp begged her to say nothing to his wife of the court festivity, as she was now quieted, and must not be disturbed again. Eric took Roland with him to the museum. Bella understood why he did so. As they were driving to the museum, they saw Prince Valerian. Bella ordered the coachman to stop, and took the prince with them; two parties could thus be formed, and Prince Valerian could occasionally go with Roland, and she with Eric. But it did not succeed—Eric never let go of Roland's hand.

They stood for some time before the Niobe group, and Bella amused herself by pointing out that the schoolmaster who is endeavouring to protect the boy from the arrow of the god, has a Russian type of face. Eric repeatedly explained that the head had been renovated, and represented that of a Scythian, and that the schoolmaster was a slave, who accompanied the boy as a sort of lacquey to his school, and in his walks generally; but Bella persisted in asserting that he was a Russian. As Eric drew attention to the fact that the girl in the centre clings closely to her mother, and covers herself helplessly, while the boy at the schoolmaster's side stretches out his hand, faces the danger, and endeavours to avert it, Roland fixed his eyes on him, and his face grew pale—almost as pale as the gyps figures under which they stood; but his eye glistened, and the soft dark hairs which were appearing on his upper lip seemed to tremble.

On their way home from the hall, Roland, as if trembling with cold, said, as he clung close to Eric—

"Do you remember how in your mother's house that time the letter with the great seal came?"

"Yes, of course."

"And you ought to have been director there. These figures stand there day and night, summer and winter, waiting for us; they remain while we are dancing and dying."

"What are you saying?" asked Eric, struck by Roland's tone and words.

"Nothing—nothing! I don't know what I am saying . . . I fancied I heard the words, but did not say them myself. I don't know what is the matter with me."

Eric hastened homewards with the sick and feverish boy.

"Roland, how pale you look!" exclaimed his mother in alarm.

Eric went with him to his room, and Roland said—"I don't know what is the matter with me." He looked round the room, and said—"It seems as if everything were turning round with me. What is it? Oh, dear me!"

He sat down on a chair, and suddenly began to cry violently. Eric stood helpless. Roland fainted away.

He opened his eyes and fixed them on Eric, just as if he did not see him. "Roland, what is the matter with you?" asked Eric.

The youth made no reply; his forehead was icy cold. Eric pulled the bell, and then bent over the boy.

Sonnenkamp entered, and asked why they did not come to table. Eric pointed to Roland. The father threw himself upon him, and groaned as if struck with death.

Joseph came, and was despatched immediately for a physician, and by strong remedies they succeeded in bringing Roland back to consciousness. His father

and Eric carried him to his bed and undressed him. He shivered with the chill of fever, so that his teeth chattered. The physician came, and looked serious. Sonnenkamp gazed at him as if benumbed with fear.

"It is an attack; I do not know what may come of it. Has he often had anything of the kind?" asked the physician.

"Never—never before!" cried Sonnenkamp.

Reviving remedies were applied, and the first words that Roland said were—"Thank you, Eric."

The doctor ordered that he should be kept quiet, so that he might sleep; he went away, but he returned an hour after—an hour full of fear, in which Eric and Sonnenkamp had scarcely ventured to speak to each other. When the doctor now looked at the sick youth, he said—"The nervous system of the young man is over-strained; it may turn to typhus fever."

"No misfortune comes singly," said Sonnenkamp; they were the only words he spoke during the whole night. He sat watching in the adjoining room, and came occasionally on tiptoe to the bed of the sufferer, in order to listen to his breathing. Frau Ceres had sent to inquire why Roland did not come. They made some excuse, and begged her to go to bed. She came, however, creeping in in the night; she had heard that Roland was slightly unwell. She went up to his bed, saw that he was sleeping quietly, and then returned back to her own room.

"No misfortune comes singly," repeated Sonnenkamp, when the doctor declared in the early morning that it was an attack of typhus fever. He ordered the most careful nursing, and was on the point of sending a sister of mercy to him, but Eric said that no one could nurse Roland better than his mother.

"Do you think she will come?"

"Certainly."

A telegram was at once despatched to the green cottage. An hour after the answer arrived, that Frau Dournay and Claudine were starting.

The news of the severe illness of the handsome youth spread rapidly through the town; servants in various liveries, and even ladies and gentlemen of the highest class, came themselves to inquire after him. At noon, when the guard marched past, playing, Roland screamed aloud: "The wild hordes are coming! They are coming! The Red Indians! Hiawatha! Laughing water! The money belongs to the ostler! It was not stolen! Take off your hat to the Baron, will you? For shame! The negroes! Ah, Franklin!"

Eric offered to beg the commandant to order that the guard should march through another street, or at any rate cease playing in front of the hotel. The snow had suddenly melted, and before the entire front of the Victoria Hotel straw was laid down to prevent the sound of carriages.

Frau Dournay arrived. Herr Sonnenkamp welcomed her warmly, and Frau Ceres lamented and said how terrible it was that Roland should be ill, adding that it had caused her to be ill herself. The mother had a good deal of difficulty in soothing her; she wished, however, that she should send for Doctor Richard, who had known Roland formerly. Doctor Richard was at once telegraphed for, and he arrived late at night. He declared that Roland had been treated with great skill, and his principal warning was directed to Eric and his mother, upon whom he impressed the necessity—with their natural excitement of mind—of preserving their equanimity in the sick room, of giving

themselves a good deal of rest and diversion, and of going out frequently, in order to refresh themselves with new impressions. He did not leave until they had both given him a promise. After having held a consultation with the acting physician, he took his departure.

"He won't die, will he?" inquired Sonnenkamp of the physician as he went down stairs. The doctor replied that in all extreme cases there was nothing to rely on but natural strength of constitution.

Sonnenkamp endeavoured to assume a resigned expression, and yet he was full of rebellion. With all his wealth, was he able to do nothing, to administer nothing, and was there nothing to rely on but natural strength of constitution, in which Roland was not superior to the son of a beggar? Frau Ceres lay on the sofa in the large balconied apartment, among the flowers and birds, staring fixedly. She scarcely spoke a word, and ate and drank but little. Every hour she was informed how Roland was going on, but she never ventured to go near his bed-side.

The want of unity in the family now exhibited itself. Each lived for himself alone, each thought that the other only existed for his happiness, and for his freedom from sorrow. At noon the princess sent her private physician. Sonnenkamp was full of gratitude for the honour, which unfortunately had been vouchsafed under such sad circumstances.

Day and night Eric, his mother, and his aunt, sat, sometimes together, and sometimes alternately, with the sick youth. He knew no one. Most of the time he was in a sort of half slumber; but now and then he leapt up, and with glowing countenance, exclaimed: "Papa is dancing on black heads! Give me my blue

bow again! Ah! ah!" he would cry, as if enchanted, "this is the German forest....Quiet, Satan! There, take the lilies of the valley...blue bow...The boy stole my ring...the laughing spirit...Pay attention to the young Baron...Back, Griffin!"

When Eric placed his hand on his brow, he grew calmer, and once when his father was present, Roland sang a negro song, but so unintelligibly, that the words of it were not to be caught, and then he cried out again: "Take away the great books! Take away the great books! they are written in blood!"

Sonnenkamp asked whether Roland had ever sung the song when he was well, and if Eric knew from whom he had learned it. Eric had never heard it. Sonnenkamp told the professor's widow how deeply he felt her reluctance to come for pleasure, but her readiness to share night watching and heavy hours of patience; he should never forget it. Frau Dournay saw that there was yet another sick one to be healed, besides the feverish youth lying there with closed eyes. She became more communicative with Sonnenkamp, and he confided to her his restless sorrow, and as he did so the thought arose in his mind, "All that I have desired, I have desired for this son. If he dies, I shall kill myself. I am far more than killed, and no one may know it. I have no past, I dare have none, and now am I also to have no future?"

Frau Dournay urged him to calm himself, for she was convinced that an agitated state of mind in those around him affected the sick one; there were influences and effects which no one could conjecture or define. In the silent night Frau Dournay sat by the sick-bed, she heard all the clocks of the towers strike, a clock with chimes among others, and as she listened

to their musical sound by the sick-bed of the rich though poor youth, the remembrance of her own life passed before her.

Prancken often inquired after Roland, but he stayed a good deal in Herr von Endlich's house, where he enjoyed the society of the young widow just returned from Madeira. Trembling between hope and fear, weeks passed away; the fancies of the sick youth seemed to have changed. He was now talking constantly with Manna, caressing her, joking with her, and teasing her about St. Antony. Manna had been told nothing of her brother's illness; what was the good of burdening her with such tidings, when she could do nothing to help? As Roland was constantly conversing with his sister in his delirium, Sonnenkamp asked Dr. Richard whether she had better not come; the doctor answered in the affirmative.

In the midst of his sorrow it came over him like a sense of deliverance, that he could now take his child from the convent, and that he would never again allow her to leave him; his heart felt lightened with the thought that if Roland recovered, he should have both children with him. Sonnenkamp wished the physician to write to Manna, how necessary she was to Roland's recovery; but Doctor Richard refused decidedly to do so, as he had only conceded that Manna's presence would be harmless, though in no wise helpful to Roland. Sonnenkamp sent the circumspect Lutz to the convent with an urgent letter; he had also begged Frau Dournay to add a few words, but she declined; she would in no way, even in a case of pressing necessity, interfere with Manna's life.

CHAPTER III.

THE roof of the convent was covered with snow, the trees, and meadows, and walks on the island were covered with snow, but in the large house there was unusual life and animation, for the sacred story was revived in the minds of the children, and was pourtrayed anew before them. Every day witnessed some representation of the glorious event which had taken place in Canaan nearly two thousand years before. Manna lived so entirely in these representations that she was often obliged to reflect where she was; she had a longing to make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, to kiss the sacred soil, and to atone for all the evil that had been done by those linked to her by close or by distant ties. Her resolve to take the veil was strengthened anew. With wonderful power she related the sacred story to the little Home-bird, who was ill in bed; and her eyes beamed as though with a fire from above. To-day, however, she smiled, for little Home-bird said: "Is there snow also in Jerusalem?"

Manna had scarcely considered what time of year it was, she lived so entirely in another world, and just as she was looking out on the melting snow, a sister came in and brought her a letter.

"Where is the messenger?" she inquired.

"He is waiting in the parlour."

"I will give him an answer," replied Manna, and she read the letter over again.

She walked up and down the cell; she wished to go to the Lady Superior and ask her what she ought to do, but she felt her heart failing her. Why ask anyone else? She held her hand before her eyes, then she looked at her hand. You cannot weep, something said within her; you ought not to weep for anything in the world.

"What is the matter with you?" cried little Home-bird from her bed. "Why do you look so angry?"

"I am not angry. Do you think I am?"

"No, now you look all right again. Stay with me, Manna—stay with me; don't go away—stay with me. Manna, I shall die."

Manna bent over the child, and quieted her, and now she felt: the first trial is come. Thou must show whether thy love for the Holy One is greater than thy family love. Thou shalt and must!

She consigned the little girl to the care of a sister, promised soon to return, and went down into the chapel. With a broken heart she threw herself on the ground and prayed fervently. For a long time she lay with her face hidden, until her resolve was taken and she raised herself.

"I must do it!" she exclaimed, "I will live for nothing but the service of the Eternal One. Roland has good nurses, he knows no one; if I go to him I do nothing for him, but for myself, in lessening my own anxiety; here, however, is little Home-bird ill, and she wants me. There is no longer a question as to what I have to do; I will remain at the post, at which not I, but the Most High, has placed me."

She thought of the Lady Superior, who had told her how her father and mother had died, and she might not break her vow. Voluntarily and without a vow,

Manna would do the same. She returned back to the cell; she wished to write, she wished to say everything that was in her mind, but she could not. She went down into the parlour and told Lutz, without adding another word, that she could not return with him. Then she went back again to her cell, and looked out upon the landscape, stiff and lifeless.

The melted snow was trickling down from the roof, and tears at length also made their way, and Manna wept vehemently; she suffered her tears to flow, but her resolve remained firm. The whole night she watched and prayed, and it was not till the following morning that she told the Lady Superior what she had done. The Lady Superior uttered no word in reply. In her cell, Manna again read the letter, and now for the first time she saw that Eric's mother was also nursing Roland. The paper trembled in her hand, as she realized that Roland had been talking with her in his feverish delirium. Why did her father say nothing of Prancken? Where is he? she asked herself. She was angry with herself for not being able to banish the world from her thoughts. With quick resolve she threw the letter into the fire, staring at it as it blazed up and then flew up the chimney in light fragments. So had it been with her—so should it be with her; nothing from the outer world should penetrate to her again.

CHAPTER IV.

THE crisis was past, he began to recover. "He is saved," said the physician, and "He is saved!" passed from lip to lip throughout the capital. The physician ordered that they should be unremitting in their care, and avoid the slightest excitement. Roland complained of terrible ennui; but the doctor smilingly replied, and Eric repeated his words, that he had enjoyed his fill of amusement before, and that ennui was the only certain step to recovery. Roland also complained that he should have to endure hunger, but his countenance looked fine and handsome as he said: "Hiawatha suffered hunger voluntarily."

Roland was more affectionate to Frau Dournay than to any; he declared that he had known her alone in his delirium, and it had been terrible pain to him not to be able to say so; for other words had constantly forced themselves to his lips than those which he had really meant to say. He was glad to see lilies of the valley near him; he remembered now having asked for some.

"Was not Manna also with me? I always saw her dark eyes."

They told him that she could not leave the convent as a little girl was very ill there. He begged for the photograph, in which he had been taken as a page, and he said to Eric: "You were right, it will be a remembrance to me in future. Oh, I feel as if ten years had

passed. Give me a looking-glass, I want to know how I look."

"You must not do so at present," replied Eric, "not for a week to come."

Roland was as obedient as a little child, and as grateful as an intelligent man. When Roland was able to get up for the first time, every one was astonished to see how he had grown in his illness, and he himself was proud that the down was colouring his upper lip. When he saw the straw in front of the house, he said: "Then the whole town knew of my illness, and I have to thank every one?"

He heard how sympathizing every one had been and he begged his father to thank them.

Sonnenkamp had intended to do so. It was the best way, better than the most brilliant society, of coming into contact with families of position. Sonnenkamp arranged to drive round the town in his best carriage and equipage, and he begged Frau Dournay to accompany him. Hard as it was to Frau Dournay to appear before the world in such company, all the more easily, as if by a magic word, did the doors open, everywhere, as Lutz announced Frau Dournay and Sonnenkamp.

The professor's widow often scarcely understood herself how she could have done it; she was cementing by it a union which she longed to break, and as often as she returned to the carriage, she had to beg Herr Sonnenkamp not always to give such prominence to her maternal care of Roland. Sonnenkamp, however, forced his way with great dexterity into the midst of conversation, by praising Frau Dournay's noble-mindedness, and modestly adding how happy he was to be allowed to attach himself to such a family. On every occasion he delighted in the consciousness that men are to be

used as puppets; that some are to be gained with the tingle of gold, and others with that of praise.

In this drive through the town he enjoyed that in which he most delighted, namely, hypocrisy, and in the sense of this he overcame his annoyance at the pride of the resident families; they were obliged now, even if against their will, to receive him as an equal. Where he had before found only insignificant points of conversation, he now contrived to introduce his life of experience, and everything had at the same time a softened aspect, mingled as it was with one true feeling, that, namely, of a father. He smiled to himself as he went down the steps, for he felt that people were saying —we did not know the man at all; he is a man of importance and of very deep feeling. The members of the committee of orders, who, as Prancken had impressed upon him, were necessary in the forwarding of his plan, were treated by him with especial attention. Thus Roland's illness had given a new impetus to the plan for the elevation to rank, and the professor's widow, against her will, had been obliged to co-operate.

An audience of the princess had been requested, in order to return thanks for her sympathy. She sent word that the professor's widow was welcome, and thus Sonnenkamp felt his visit declined.

Frau Dournay drove to the palace. Of all that she had lately had to endure, this was the most painful of all; she was obliged to assent to the princess's remarks on Sonnenkamp's fine character, his extensive benevolence, and his high-mindedness. The privy counsellor's wife, who was lady in waiting to the princess, was her authority, and Frau Dournay did not venture to contradict it. Again she saw in what a false position she had placed herself, and how she must

allow herself to be a tool in a dishonest game. And if people ever learned what she already knew with regard to Sonnenkamp, how would she appear to them?

Prancken brought the tidings in confidence, that an order had been awarded to Herr Sonnenkamp.

"That is the first step, the first stage."

Frau Ceres however complained: "Yes, that is for you; but what am I to have?"

Sonnenkamp expressed his confidence that the elevation to rank would certainly soon arrive.

"It is so long delayed," said Frau Ceres complainingly. He confessed that the stiff formality observed in matters in the old world was annoying to himself, but it must be endured.

"Certainly," replied Frau Ceres, "but it is good that you have an order; now people can see at once in society, that you are not a servant."

A few days afterwards, carriage after carriage drew up before the hotel, every one came to congratulate on his being invested with an order.

Sonnenkamp was very humble in his demeanour. A bitter drop fell, however, into his cup of joy, when the paper, edited by Professor Crutius, under the heading, "List of Honours," contained the following paragraph:—"Herr Sonnenkamp, of Villa Eden, transplanted from the Havanna, has received from high quarters the Cross of Merit, it is said, on account of his improvement in the cultivation of fruit, which includes the improvement of the cultivator. Among the fine trees in Villa Eden, there is only wanting the genealogical tree that flourishes so well in our happy Fatherland."

There were mischief makers enough who expressed their indignation at such bitterness against Sonnen-

kamp; they watched to see what attitude he would assume. Sonnenkamp behaved as if it were indifferent to him, but secretly he resolved to bribe this most virtuous of all moral personages, so-called public opinion. He went to the editor's office. He was shown into a room where he found Professor Crutius, who received him with extreme politeness. Sonnenkamp said that he understood a joke; he had been accustomed to publicity in America. Crutius did not consider it necessary to make any reply. Sonnenkamp expressed himself delighted to find Professor Crutius in so important a position; the latter made a bow of acknowledgment. A small gas flame was burning in the office; Sonnenkamp begged to be allowed to smoke a cigar and offered one to Crutius. With courteous thanks Crutius accepted it.

"I remember well," began Sonnenkamp, "that at the time I had the honour of a visit from you, you uttered a bold but striking expression; you had the courage to say that America was advancing towards monarchism."

"Yes," replied Crutius, half in jest and half in earnest, "and I threw it out not merely as a popular subject of conversation; I was of opinion that it might be regarded as a presage of monarchism, that the better classes in America at that time withdrew completely from politics."

Crutius paused, he looked with a smile at the man seated before him, and at last he said: "I am no longer of the same opinion. The sluggishness of the better classes in America has ceased. This is to be seen in the public papers and in public assemblies, and Herr Weidmann has also sent me letters from his nephew, Dr. Fritz, which plainly indicate a change for the better; everything is again political strife and

party feeling." He went to his chest and opened it; he intended to refund Herr Sonnenkamp his former bounty, but he said almost audibly to himself: "No, not now; in due time you shall have a public acquittance." He closed the chest, seated himself again opposite Sonnenkamp, and began: "I must offer you my apology. When I had the honour of visiting you at your villa, I took you for a man of the name of Banfield."

As he spoke he watched Sonnenkamp's countenance, but he answered with the utmost calmness: "I am thankful to you for telling me so; it is always well to clear up any misunderstanding between man and man. I have unfortunately been frequently mistaken for the man, and once I travelled purposely to Virginia to become acquainted with my counterpart, but just as I arrived he had died."

"Really? I have heard nothing of his death, and I am astonished that Herr Weidmann's nephew, who stood at open war with this Herr Banfield, has told us nothing of it. It is, indeed, striking how much you resemble him in your whole exterior. I will now, of course, not mention this, when I write Banfield's obituary."

"As regards myself," said Sonnenkamp smiling, "it would not disturb me, but to my wife and children such a comparison would probably be extremely unpleasant."

Crutius assured him that all personalities were indifferent to him; he had only to do with principles. Sonnenkamp praised his conduct and called it the excellence of European culture. Crutius accompanied Herr Sonnenkamp with great politeness through the office as far as the steps. When he returned, however,

to his own room he threw open the window, for the air felt oppressive.

"It is he after all," said he to himself. "Take care, thou knight of the order of merit! I hold thee too by a band; for a little while thou shalt flutter round me."

He looked for the paper in which the notice had stood, he made a red stroke and three marks of exclamation on the margin, and he placed the paper aside in a special division, in which were kept matters "for future use."

The prince must have forgotten that he had intended sending for Sonnenkamp; and Sonnenkamp could not personally express his thanks to the prince, for he with many gentlemen of the court, Prancken among others, had repaired to a hunting seat, where the grand spring hunts were to be held. Prancken had taken his departure out of humour, for he considered it unbefitting that Sonnenkamp should have entered into connexion with a newspaper writer.

All was still in the Hotel Victoria; Frau Dournay and Claudine had returned to the green cottage. Roland begged and urged day by day that they would leave the capital. At length his wish was complied with, and Sonnenkamp allowed his house, his servants, his park, and his hothouses to see the bright ornament of his button-hole. It was a good remembrance to have brought back of a winter that had witnessed so much joy and sorrow. Roland could not leave off greeting everything; for the first time the feeling of home in all its power, seemed to be awakened in him.

In the house there was greater cheerfulness than ever before: even Frau Ceres could not escape it, for Roland's nature emitted so much joy that all partook of it; moreover Roland had something in his heart

which he only disclosed to Frau Dournay, and even to her he only hinted at it. On his birthday, which was the very day Eric had come to them, he was preparing a pleasure for all, of which no one had an idea. The earth was getting green and gay, and the birds were singing, and vessels were passing to and fro on the river. On the day before his birthday a letter from Roland was found in his room, in which he begged them not to be uneasy, he would return on the following day and bring the fairest of treasures back with him. The matter was investigated, and it was soon ascertained that Roland had gone with Lutz to the convent.

CHAPTER V.

NOT far from the island two steamers were halting, one was going towards the hills and the other towards the valley. On that going towards the valley Roland was a passenger. He asked why they did not land; the captain pointed to the island. On the island the nuns and a priest with the choristers were walking at the head of a bier carried by girls in white; the bier was covered with flowers, and the children were singing in the clear spring air. Roland's heart trembled. He landed and stood on the shore by the ferry-man, who was to take him across to the island. The ferry-man shook his head and said softly: "Not now! not now! or are you perhaps a relation of the child's?"

"Of what child?"

"Over there in the convent a child has died, oh such a beautiful child; whoever saw her, his heart leapt for joy. Our Lord God won't have much to alter when He makes an angel of her."

"How old was the child?"

"Seven, or at the most eight. Hush, now they are coming."

The bells rang in the spring air, the clouds of incense rose, and the procession moved towards the shore. The ferry-man had taken off his hat and was praying with folded hands; Roland also bared his head and

gazed towards the island; the procession went on, then it disappeared and all was still. They sank the youthful corpse in the earth, the birds sang, not a breath moved, and a steamer was coming up the river. The procession came again into view, singing as it went, and it disappeared within the open gates of the convent.

"There," said the ferry-man, "now I will take you across."

Roland now wished to remain on land; he did not like to surprise his sister at such an hour, she ought to rest first. It was well that he did so, for of all in the convent no one was so deeply saddened as Manna. Little Home-bird, the sweet child, had endured it for a year; she seemed to have grown cheerful and to be making good progress in her studies, but when the spring came, she had faded away like a flower, which, trained in a room, has been too early exposed to cold. How Manna had nursed the child day and night, and how happy she had been with her! A sort of visionary wisdom had come over the child, and she had often said to Manna that she should tell God and all the good angels in heaven about Manna; she delighted in thinking of heaven as of some Christmas festivity. In the midst of all, she would then beg Manna: "Tell me about Roland. I see him running with his bow and arrows, and oh, he is so handsome!"

Manna would tell her about him, and she could always make the little girl laugh when she imitated how Roland's puppies tumbled about over each other.

When Manna sometimes played the harp to the child, she would fix her eyes on her, and say: "Mamma plays the harp too—so beautifully—and weeps."

The physician and the hospital nun, who understood

medicine, urged Manna to give herself more rest, but Manna was strong, and refused. In her arms the little girl died, and her last words were: "Good morning, Manna; now there is no more night."

Manna had been one of the bearers of the child's bier; she had thrown three clods of earth on the coffin, and she had not shed a tear. It was not till the clergyman addressed them, and said that the child was called away from this earth, like a child summoned home by its father from its playground, that no harm might befall it, that she wept bitterly. On her return from the cemetery she had gone again to the little Home-bird's empty bed, and had prayed that God would grant that she might enter eternity as pure as this little child. And then she had composed herself; the time could not now be far distant when she must return for a short period to the bustle of life, until the Father of all men summoned her from that playground back to his protecting home. It seemed to her as if she even now heard voices from the noisy world, alluring her to come. She felt she must obey them, but she was firmly resolved to return here as to her only home.

She went down stairs, she wandered to the place under the fir-tree, where she had so often worked; there was still the little bench on which the child had sat near her, almost at her feet. Manna sat here for a long time. What a multitude of things could life bring upon her in this one year! Her thoughts ever wandered again to the child, and followed the young spirit into its heavenly rest. Presently she heard footsteps; she looked up, she saw a youth like Roland, but much taller, much more manly.

"Manna! Manna!" cried Roland, hastening to her.

She raised herself, and with a loud cry, brother and sister fell into each other's arms.

"Sit down by me," said Manna, at length.

They sat down on the seat under the fir tree, and Manna, pointing to the little bench, talked of the child, and how often she had told her of Roland. Roland remembered the sunny day, when the child had clung to him, and had called to him, "I like you."

Manna said that the child had died of home-sickness.

"Yes, Roland, you do not understand it yet, but you will learn it; our whole life is nothing but home-sickness for that heavenly home, and it is happy for those who die of it."

Roland was struck with the intense excitement of his sister's manner. He embraced Manna again, kissed her, and both wept without scarcely knowing why. With calmness and determination he then told her that she must return with him to her earthly home. He reminded her that the following day was his birthday, and his one desire was that on this day she should return with him to their parents.

"Yes, I will go with you," said Manna, "and it is better immediately."

Hand in hand the brother and sister walked towards the convent. Manna explained to the Lady Superior that she should return with her brother; the Lady Superior assented, and gave her her blessing. Manna now hastened in feverish excitement to the nuns and schoolfellows, and bid them farewell; then she went into the chapel and prayed silently, and lastly she begged Roland to accompany her to the grave of the little girl. Roland saw a row of graves placed regularly side by side, without any token of memorial.

Manna replied to his inquiry that here the nuns were buried.

"That is hard," he said, "to be still nameless even after death."

"It is only natural," replied Manna. "Any one who takes the veil, lays aside her parents' name, and adopts a holy one, which belongs to her only until death, and then passes to another."

"I understand; the nun's name cannot be inscribed on the grave, nor the real one either; I suppose some of those are of noble birth."

"Yes, certainly, most of them are noble."

"What would you say, if we were also noble?"

"Roland, how can you talk so?" replied Manna. "To talk like that here? Come away! Such thoughts are a desecration to the place."

She drew Roland away from the little burial ground, and walked with him along the gravel path, but suddenly she left him standing, and returned once more, knelt down by the grave, and then joined her brother.

Lutz was standing ready with the luggage. Manna stepped into the boat, and brother and sister journeyed up the river homewards. All the travellers on the vessel contemplated them with curious interest, as they sat quietly hand-in-hand, looking at the scenery.

"Tell me," said Roland, "why did you say when you went into the convent, that you were also an Iphigenia?"

"I cannot tell you."

"You can, indeed; I understand it. I have read alone and with Eric both the Iphigenia of Euripides and that of Goethe. But they are neither of them like you."

"It was only—Oh, let it be forgotten."

"Do you know, too," exclaimed Roland, "that Iphigenia became the wife of the great hero, Achilles, and lived with him in eternal happiness on the island Leuko?"

"You have learned all sorts of things," said Manna, smiling.

"Eric told me," continued Roland, "that the sacrifice of Iphigenia arose from the same foundation as the narrative of the sacrifice of Isaac. In old times, people believed that the Deity could be appeased by sacrifice."

Manna's countenance darkened; here indeed was ruinous heresy. She could not express what she felt, for Roland exclaimed: "Now I know it! Oh, how beautiful! Orestes was obliged to fetch his sister from the temple of Tauris, where she was a priestess. That is it! Yes, that is what you imagined! Oh, that will please Eric. But when Iphigenia was on board the vessel with her brother, you may be certain that he played many foolish tricks, and that she laughed at them. Can you not laugh any more? You used to laugh like a wood-pigeon. Do laugh once!"

He laughed with all his heart, but Manna's face did not brighten, and during the whole journey she remained thoughtful and quiet. Evening had come on.

"See the sunlight on the glass dome," said Roland, "we shall soon be home. They are thinking, of course, that you are with me."

"Home! home!" said Manna softly to herself.

The reflection on the glass dome seemed to dazzle her, and she closed her eyes.

Two carriages were waiting at the landing-place. Sonnenkamp embraced his daughter and kissed her; she suffered it, but she did not return it. As if frightened, Manna turned to look at the steamer, which,

having quickly deposited all that was to go no further, continued its voyage.

"Your mother is in the carriage," said Sonnenkamp, offering Manna his arm; she timidly placed her hand in his arm and went towards the close carriage, in which Frau Ceres was sitting with Fräulein Perini; she embraced her mother passionately.

Sonnenkamp and Roland got into the other carriage, and they drove to the villa. He murmured something to himself, he had not yet heard Manna's voice.

"Where is Eric?" inquired Roland.

"With his mother in the green cottage. It is considerate of a stranger to retire to his own family, in order to leave us alone."

Roland was astonished at the words. Were Eric and his family then strangers?

They reached the villa, Fräulein Perini also withdrew quickly: she went to the Rectory, and from thence a messenger was soon despatched to the telegraph office. The parents were alone with the children, but it seemed as if the atmosphere of the room prevented repose and ease.

Sonnenkamp and Roland accompanied Manna to her room. She was glad to find everything in its old order, and when she saw the fire-place filled with beautiful living flowers, she turned round and said; "I thank you, father."

She now voluntarily held out her hand to him, but she shuddered, for she felt the ring on his thumb. The father left the brother and sister alone. Roland urged Manna to visit at once Eric's aunt and mother. "Oh, you must love them also," he said.

"I must? You can't compel people to love. Let me tell you at once, Roland—but, no, it is not necessary."

She complied at length with his wish, and went with Roland through the gate across the meadows along the river side.

"There goes Eric. Eric! Eric!" cried Roland loudly. But Eric did not turn round, he walked on and disappeared among the willows.

In the evening, as Frau Dournay and Claudine accompanied the brother and sister on their way home, they met Eric.

"Oh! at last!" exclaimed Roland. "Now, Manna, this is he!" Eric took off his hat, and Manna bowed politely.

"Why do you not speak? Have you both forgotten how to speak? Eric, this is my sister Manna—Manna, this is my friend, my Eric!"

"Calm yourself, Roland," said Eric. Manna looked up at the sound of his melodious voice. "Yes, Fräulein," he continued, "for the second time I see you in the twilight."

Manna wished to tell him that she had also seen him by daylight, at a time when they had not spoken to him, but had listened to his sublime voice; she repressed, however, this announcement.

Eric accompanied them to the new gate; then Roland went on with his sister to the villa, and Eric returned with his family to the green cottage. For the second time he had seen Manna, and for the second time little more than her sparkling eye.

When Manna was alone in her room, she thought: How strange that this man should resemble the picture of St. Antony! The comparison seemed thoroughly impossible; it might be a look which had reminded Roland of him, an expression of the eyes, for she too had seen nothing more of Eric than his tall figure and

his eyes. She knelt long in prayer. When she laid down to rest, she fastened a small cord, which a nun had given her for penance, more closely round her hips, so that it might lacerate her flesh.

From the moment when Roland had first seen the sun rise, he had resolved once every year to repeat the sight, and if possible on the same day. So he woke Eric in the morning before dawn. They went together to a height, speaking scarcely a word and watching the light gradually coming; then they wandered on further and further, and Roland reminded Eric of the idea he had once expressed to him of wishing to give one common solemn expression to the feelings experienced on seeing a sun-rise. Now he understood what Eric had desired and why it was impossible.

Roland had begun his birth-day with Eric alone in the open air, and then they returned back to the villa. When they reached the valley, the bells were ringing and they saw Manna going to church. Sonnenkamp also had been early up; he went to Frau Dournay's and told her how fully he entered into her plan; he thought it very beautiful that royal children should celebrate their birth-day, not by receiving but by giving. He thanked the widow also, especially for allowing the plan to be regarded as his own, and added that he only unwillingly accepted a proposal that verged on untruth, but that he did so for the sake of his child. Frau Dournay pressed her lips together. This man, whose whole life was a lie, enacted the truth-lover to her; she had, however, already accustomed herself to the thought that one must not always ask the sources and motives of the good that is done. She went with Sonnenkamp to the villa.

Just as they arrived, a carriage drove up; and

Prancken alighted. He said he had come for Roland's birth-day, and was highly delighted when he heard that Manna was also there; it was not necessary to mention the telegram which Fräulein Perini had sent to him. As he stood on the terrace overlooking the Rhine, he saw Manna walking up and down with a small book in her hand and her lips slightly moving.

Fräulein Perini presently came and whispered with Prancken. She was proud of having torn asunder the net woven by the noble-minded Professor family, for it was evident to her that Eric had inoculated his pupil with the plan of fetching Manna; the subtle web had begun the very evening of her arrival; Manna had been taken to the green cottage and had returned pleased with all, and above all delighted with the aunt.

Manna came at length on the terrace, and again held out her left hand to Prancken, for her right held her prayer-book. Prancken expressed himself delighted that no blossom on the fair family tree was now wanting, and as he went on entering into Manna's feelings and imagining what must be her sensations on her return to her parents' house, she said calmly: "Our house is a tent, which is pitched and taken down again." Prancken quickly caught the suggestion; he had accustomed himself sufficiently to religious phraseology to infer the line of thought which had produced the expression. A certain conversational volubility, with which Prancken introduced a few general reflections, surprised Manna at first, but still she seemed pleased to see the versatile man familiar with such subjects. She felt herself closer to him when he, belonging as he did to her church, lived with her in the same sphere of thought; and she cast her eyes down, as Prancken, drawing from his pocket the Thomas à Kempis she had

given him, said how he owed all the good that was in him to her on account of her gift.

"Pray, put the book back again," said Manna quickly, for she heard the voices of Frau Dournay and the Major, who were approaching.

Prancken did as he was told, he held his hand on the book which was lying next his heart, and he looked full at Manna; he was happy and satisfied, a secret and certain understanding existed between them. Presently Roland and Eric joined them. Manna embraced her brother heartily, Roland held out his hand to Prancken, who also embraced him, but Roland quickly turned away from him and said: "Manna, give Herr Eric also your hand, to-day is his birth-day with us; this day a year ago, he became mine or I his. Isn't it so, Eric? Give him your hand."

She held out her hand. For the first time Eric and Manna saw each other clearly by the light of day, and she said: "I thank you for all the kindness you have shown my brother."

Eric was struck with Manna's appearance; it was doubtful whether the expression of her face was sadness or cold indifference; her voice was charmingly soft, but there was a touch of melancholy in the tone.

They went at length into the large hall, where Frau Dournay and Claudine and Fräulein Perini and Frau Ceres were sitting. All the windows were strictly closed, for Frau Ceres avoided the morning air. She yawned as Roland entered, then she embraced him and kissed him.

Frau Dournay embraced Roland, and congratulated him warmly. Several packets, marked with names, were lying on the large table. Frau Dournay, with

the help of Fräulein Milch, had prepared a list of those of Roland's age, who were on this day to receive a present. They were journeymen, apprentices, sailors, and vinedressers; for each a suitable present was prepared. In the centre of the table lay a large envelope. Sonnenkamp had quickly placed it there on entering, and on it was written: "For Captain Doctor Eric Dournay." After a rapid survey, Roland had at once observed it, and brought it to Eric. Eric opened it, and found in it a packet of bank-notes of a considerable sum. He turned pale, and looked round for a moment, then he put the packet back again into the envelope.

Sonnenkamp, who was standing by Manna and Prancken, had said something in a whisper to the latter. Eric now walked up to him, and handing him the packet, he begged in a trembling voice that Herr Sonnenkamp would——

"No, no, do not thank me; I have to thank you," interposed Sonnenkamp.

Eric looked up boldly, and said: "Do not be angry with me, if I decline this present. Excuse me from telling you the reasons for my refusal. Believe me, I cannot take the money."

"A free man like you," interposed Prancken, "must not waste words over it. Keep it."

He spoke as one belonging to the family, almost as if he had presented the gift himself. Eric looked at him fixedly, and then at Manna. He felt that it was Prancken's intention to make him appear before her on this first morning as a needy recipient. He looked at her, almost imploring her to come to his assistance, but she was silent. He laid down the packet, and quitted the room.

Sonnenkamp and Prancken shrugged their shoulders,

and Prancken said: "It is another instance of beggarly pride."

Roland sat at the richly loaded table, but scarcely ate a mouthful. There was a slight discussion as to who should give the usual toast to him. Did it belong to Eric or to Prancken? Both urged it upon the Major, and he rose: "Gentlemen and ladies!"

"Bravo!" cried Prancken.

"Thank you," said the Major. "Interrupt me as much as you will, I have learned to vault, and every hindrance becomes a sort of leap to me. So, gentlemen and ladies! The human race is divided into male and female—"

General laughter. The Major was quite delighted at it.

"You see a pair in this garden of Eden."

Prancken handed the Major an apple, calling out: "Perhaps you will use this in carrying on your image."

Roland was vexed that Prancken so often interrupted the good Major; he begged him therefore not to make him confused.

Softly, just as if he were addressing Laadi, the Major muttered: "Be quiet, boy, be quiet; I can stand fire."

And he continued aloud: "So we have here two children, the daughter of the house, and the son of the house, and the children have us; they have their parents, they have an adopted grandmother and aunt, and they have here"—he struck his breast, that it rumbled—"an uncle. We love them as if they were our own relations, and they love us also, is it not so?"

"Yes," cried Roland, and Manna nodded.

The Major continued: "Well, if I had a son...no, that's not what I meant to say...if I had a teacher for

my, for this son...no, that also is not what I meant to say...Well, then, our mad-cap there...you see the down is already growing on his face...may the Architect of all the worlds bless him, and make him grow into a man who understands his own happiness, his own, and that of others, of all his brethren of every faith, and of every race upon earth."

He was on the point of saying Amen, but he corrected himself, and exclaimed: "Hurra! Hip, hip, hurra!"

The Major sat down and unfastened some buttons under his napkin. With ready power of speech, Sonnenkamp next gave a toast to Eric and his aunt and mother.

"You must speak—you must speak too," urged the Major.

Eric rose at length, holding up his glass; the sun sparkled on the wine, and pointing to it, he said: "The sun of to-day is greeting the sun of the past year. My Roland, this laughing sunny day acts like fire upon the wine lying in its safe cask in the cool ground, or transmitted to distant countries, refreshing the hearts of men. So may the sun of to-day warm our hearts, when desolate and chilly days may come. May that which has refreshed you, and delighted your fellow-men, ripen in you, my Roland, growing on at length into the beautiful and free temple of God."

When he sat down again, he met a look from Manna's eyes; she had seen him now for the first time. His countenance bore the impress of a mind which seemed to hold all passions in control, and betrayed a manly resolve, steadfast enough to make one feel that with this man by one's side in danger, there was help at hand. But she needed no help.

Sonnenkamp and Prancken shrugged their shoulders at Eric's speech. They repressed a laugh, and Sonnenkamp whispered to Prancken; "It really seems as if the man believes what he says."

Fresh visitors arrived, for the doctor appeared, and with him Lina, who wished to welcome her friend back again to life, as she called it. Manna was grateful for their kindness, but maintained a certain unapproachable manner.

Sonnenkamp invited Lina to spend a few weeks with his daughter, and Manna could not help expressing her assent. Lina accepted the invitation, provided her parents would allow her to do so, and she drove back with the doctor, to be fetched on the following day. Prancken remained, and went with Manna into the garden, and she told him that she already painfully felt that life in the world beguiled us into want of truth, for that in reality she had no desire to have a visit from Lina, and yet had been obliged to agree. She repressed the words that had risen to her lips, for she was on the point of confessing that she already felt confused with the bustle of the house, and missed the regular and pure quiet of the convent life; she only said that she felt strange in the world again. When Prancken thanked her for this confidence, she shrunk back and said, scarcely drawing her breath, that the world makes us talkative, even when we wish to be reserved.

"I am glad that you mention reserve," resumed Prancken, "for the prince of the church inculcated it it upon me in the very same words: 'Maintain a reserve! Men who speak much and easily, are at bottom sure to be triflers.'"

He fancied that Manna perceived that he was aiming

at Eric, but she gave no sign of referring the charge of trifling to Eric. Prancken then asked plainly: "Do you not find something trifling in that talkative Herr Dournay?"

Manna replied: "The man speaks much, but—"

She paused; Prancken was intensely eager to hear what she would add.

". . . he speaks much, but he thinks much also," continued Manna.

Prancken now cautiously chose a direction which, with a careful aim, could scarcely miss. This was scarcely necessary, for a man whose sphere of activity was as extensive as Eric's, afforded many points of attack. Prancken thought it assuming of Eric to employ the sanctity of a temple for his irreligious remarks, and he called it a kind of forgery which might be very delusive to a young and trusting mind. He looked at Manna as he spoke, but she was silent.

"Take care of yourself," he added; "he impresses every one with his honesty."

The expression seemed to please him, for he repeated it: "This way of exhibiting his honesty is clever enough, but it may be seen through. Just watch how often he uses the word humanity; I once counted, and he had used it fourteen times in one hour. He assumes great humility, but his self-conceit surpasses all bounds."

Prancken laughed. He knew how easy it was to make a high-minded resolute man appear ridiculous, and it was not without satisfaction that he saw the impression his words left upon Manna. Once a man is placed in an aspect in which he appears ridiculous, there is no help left for him; and this Prancken knew and hoped. He added, however:

"Our Roland has learned many things of the honest

man, but he has now had enough, and it is time for him soon to enter a higher sphere."

Manna returned to the house. On the garden steps she encountered Eric; both stood still. Eric seemed as if he had something to say, and he began—"I can imagine how painful it must be to you to begin your life at home with a festival; it makes the day seem a blank to you."

"Why do you wish to know my thoughts?" replied Manna, and passed on.

She went up the steps, compressing her lips with anger that they had spoken so hardly. How had the words come to her lips? Was it a secret fear of approximation? Was it pride? Had Prancken's insinuations tempted her to speak so, or were all these reasons at work together? She repented having wounded a fellow-creature on the very first day of her return home. She spent the whole evening in her room. It was late when Roland knocked at her door, and refused to go till she had opened it to him. He sat down by her, and said—

"Oh! Manna, after all the events of to-day, I cannot get one thought out of my mind. Every one to whom I took a present, said—'I will pray for you.' Can one do so, and of what good is it? What is the use of another's praying for me, and saying all sorts of good and fine things of me to God? What can it help, when I am myself not good at heart?"

"Roland, what are you saying? What thoughts you have!" exclaimed Manna, embracing him warmly; then, leaving him standing still in astonishment, she hurried into her bedroom and threw herself on her knees.

Even to-day she had seen the variance at home

She prayed for Roland, that his mind might be enlightened and freed, but while she prayed a strange feeling thrilled through her. She wrung her hands; she lamented and wept. Was it true that no one can answer for another, and can sacrifice himself for him? No, it was not true—it could not be true! She felt herself oppressed by some tangible burden that had fallen from heaven, as these doubts and questions agitated her mind. What did it mean? Could a man do more evil than good to his fellow-man? Was it so? must it be so? There was a wild tumult in her heart, but at length she smiled, for a thought occurred to her: a great contest was assigned to her; it was beginning already. She was to save her brother's soul, and she said to herself that she could not do this by vehemence, but by mildness and gentleness. She raised herself up, and returned to the room in which she had left Roland; she held out her hand to him, and said—"We will help each other to be better. I have much to give you and to receive from you. But that will settle itself."

She sat down quietly by his side, and held his hand.

"Oh!" cried Roland, "how happy you must feel to be at home again; the convent is no home, after all, for any one."

"That is why it is the best for us," replied Manna; "every day and every hour shows us that we are homeless on earth. If this world were our home, we should both, you and I—no . . . Why do you lead me to such unfitting talk!"

"Eric is right," resumed Roland; "he says you are really religious; that which with millions is only on lips, comes with you from the heart."

"Did Eric say so?"

"Yes, and a great deal more."

"But Roland," interposed Manna, "one ought never to repeat what others have said about a person."

"Not even when it is good?"

"Not even then. One cannot know—no," she interrupted herself. "You are of course very happy in having such a true friend as Eric?"

"Of course I am! And does he please you also more than Prancken?"

Manna was ready to smile, but she repressed it, and said—"Let your tutor teach you not to make comparisons. But now, remember that I have been in the convent, and must be much alone. Good-night."

She kissed her brother. Manna was not yet to be alone. In the convent she had had no attendance, but now she was obliged—for her father had ordered it—to be undressed by a maid. As the maid unfastened her beautiful black plaits, she praised her thick and well-grown hair. And yet, thought Manna, it is to be cut off.

A feeling of fear thrilled through her; she fancied she heard the scissors cutting through her hair. At length she was alone, and after long hours of silent contemplation and prayer, she wrote to the Lady Superior:—

"We have been celebrating to-day my brother's birthday and my own return to my father's house; but I am longing for my birthday, which will be my return to my Heavenly Father's House."

BOOK X.

CHAPTER I.

TRADITION tells of a giant child, who regarded the ploughman with his horse and plough as playthings, took them up in her apron, and carried them away. It was the same with Manna.

Far away from all, forgetful of the world, and subduing the world, absorbed in thought by day and night, the doings of men appeared to her but child's play. Life was vain trifling—death alone was serious.

Thus thinking, Manna was standing at the window the morning after Roland's birthday; she was looking at the view—she was thinking of people; but everything appeared far—far removed from her. The convent bell, which had awakened the pupils at the first dawn of day, was still so fresh in her memory, that even in sleep she fancied she heard its sound, and was awakened by it. She was obliged to call to mind where she was. She was at home.—Where is home?

Everything was still quiet in the villa; Manna alone was awake, except the countless birds that thronged the garden. She went into the park; she had a sense of disquietude; she looked round, as if she felt an eye resting on her. Eric was also awake in the early morning, and was standing at the window. But he took care to give no sign of having seen her.

He had opened the window, and had perceived Manna. He withdrew softly, and, forgetful of her rudeness to him, he had thought of what the girl must be feeling on her return from the seclusion of the convent to her wealthy paternal home.

The bells of the neighbouring village rang, and from every quarter on either side of the river, both up and down the Rhine, the bells were sounding. Manna left the park, and returned into the house to fetch her prayer-book. She heard at the entrance Fräulein Perini ordering the servants to have the rooms ready for the sheriff's daughter. Manna had it on her lips to complain to her former governess of the untrue position in which she had placed herself, for she dreaded Lina's arrival, and had felt her giddy manner on the previous day most jarring: but she had resolved to overcome everything by herself alone, and she had determined to beg Lina plainly not to visit her just now, as it was necessary for her at present to remain alone.

Just then a messenger arrived with a note from Lina, who regretted that it was impossible for her to accept the hospitality at Villa Eden. She begged Manna to send her a line to assure her that she was not angry with her. Manna was glad to be free without offending any one.

The bells rang again, and Manna went to church.

Fräulein Perini was proud and happy; others might endeavour to gain Manna in various ways—she alone could go with her to church.

"Have you still the habit of not caring to talk in the morning?" asked Fräulein Perini.

Manna nodded silently. When the service was over, and both left the church together, Fräulein Perini said that she would introduce Manna to the

clergyman, who had only been appointed here during her absence. Manna requested to be allowed to go alone. She went to the clergyman's house. She seemed to have been expected, for the clergyman came down the steps to meet her, and welcomed her with his blessing. He led her by the hand into his room.

Manna seated herself on the sofa and said: "Fräulein Perini wished to introduce me to you, reverend sir. That must be done as regards a stranger, but you are no stranger, you are a servant of our holy church."

The pastor placed the tips of his refined hands together, and said in a calm tone: "You are on the right road, keep to it. Worldlings come to a place, they are strange, utterly strange, they know not whether there is a fellow-creature there, holding the same ideas as themselves, and among them there are not two who think the same in the same words; they have no bond of unity, they float about like the dust in the sunbeam. But you, if you enter the remotest village, you are at home, there is one house and in it one man, one of your own mind who greets you as a brother, as a father; for he is placed there by a higher power. You are doubly welcome to me, that you felt this at once. Knock at my door, it will open to you at all times; knock at my heart, it is open to you. I have no house of my own, no heart of my own; my house belongs to him who follows me, and my heart to him who touches it."

The pastor paused and looked at Manna; her eyes had closed as if she could not see in the sunlight, nor look at the face on which the spirit had descended. The pastor felt that she was agitated; he dwelt intentionally upon general matters, without touching upon personal ones, for he did not wish to widen the cleft

between the daughter and father. Manna on the other hand was reserved, for to the convent priest alone had she confessed the real cause of her readiness to offer herself, and she had received permission from him henceforth to conceal it. Both were reserved, and neither was aware that they had nothing to conceal from the other. The pastor placed his hand kindly on her head and said: "Yes, that you have come alone, and know why you have come alone, that relieves us of all explanation, as worldlings call it. Explanation!" he repeated laughing. "And after all they never do understand each other, these educated people, as they call themselves, or self-educated as they ought to call themselves, for they fancy that they can make themselves anything. They do, indeed, need the introduction of another, who must say, there is such a one and this is so and so; but we, we need no introduction, and no recommendation. Speak with me of everything, of all that is sacred and that is perverted, of all that is great and small. While you feel homeless and disquieted in the world, remember here is rest and home. Yonder there, your father has a hot-house for plants, which do not belong to our climate; this room is a hot-house for plants of the most Holy Faith who are not at home elsewhere. I raise not a stone against any, but I say and you know it, this seed within us is from heaven, and in this world it is in a foreign clime."

The pastor remained standing at the window looking out; Manna was sitting on the sofa. For a time there was not a word spoken. Manna was touched by his noble readiness. She asked timidly how she ought to behave towards all the people who were on terms of friendly intercourse with her home, and boasted of refined education.

"You ask with decision and wisdom, that is a sign of maturity," replied the pastor. "What are you to do? You are to smile at all the vain-glory. These worldly-wise boast themselves, and are so small in their self-conceit that they fancy that the world possesses no more understanding, and is regulated by no more wisdom, than their reason can gauge; they estimate God according to the standard of their own intellect."

The pastor had suddenly assumed another tone, a more passionate and vehement one, and Manna shrank back in alarm. The pastor, who observed this, composed himself again and said: "You see I am still weak, and allow myself to be carried away by my feelings. They will now also have to become acquainted with you—I mean, those so-called heroes of reason, or rather the weak children of reason, who can never be converted because they lack the courage which can become humility."

The pastor imagined that Manna understood that he was alluding to Eric; he did not choose to enter more fully into the subject, but it was as well to prepare her. Then he turned round smiling, seated himself, and said: "But we are wandering from the point. Speak."

Manna complained of the difficulty she felt in having a year of trial, and of mixing with the world, before she quitted it. The pastor quieted her, saying: "You wish to take the veil; it is already spread over you and over the world, invisible to others. The things of the world touch you not, there is a veil between you and the world; and this veil remains till death frees us."

He went more cautiously than Prancken to work; he was not going to attack Eric, and thus, perhaps, awaken an interest in Manna's mind: he praised him,

but in that pitying manner, which is so easily assumed by those standing on positive ground. When Manna asked why the pastor had not used his influence to prevent Eric's acceptance as a tutor, he replied that he rejoiced in her zeal, but that one must let alone many things in the world, and any contest with her father was utterly vain; besides Roland had used his own will in the matter. Moreover Eric, though a thorough heretic, recognized sacred things to a certain extent, although much arrogance was combined with this recognition.

Without ceremony the pastor then said that Manna had better return home, as they would be expecting her. He told her she was never to conceal the fact of having been with him, but that he would forgive her if she often neglected to come for some time; his conviction would remain inviolable, that in her inmost heart she was devoted to the most Holy Faith.

"Now go," he added, "and you know that I shall pray for you."

Manna fixed her gaze on him. "I shall pray for you,"—how often had she heard the words, without having a doubt about them; now they assumed another aspect, and the question flashed across her mind: Can one then pray for a fellow-creature? The enigma that Roland had suggested to her mind, filled her thoughts and became the enigma of her life. She longed to ask whether children must expiate the sins of parents, or rather whether the child can atone for the parent. She longed to tell it all to the pastor and to have his help, but when he again repeated: "Now go away, my child!" she turned away her inquiring glance and went.

Manna was walking dreamily along, but she was

presently aroused, for the two dogs, Rose and Thistle, bounded up to her, glad to have their mistress back again.

"So, our madcap is at home again?" cried a voice from the distance; it was that of the gamekeeper, who had brought the dogs.

She scarcely heard, as the gamekeeper, coming nearer, told her the story of his late life; it was not till he said, "Yes, Fräulein, I have been a silly fellow and I repent it," that she asked: "And what have you done?"

"Ho, ho! I repent having done nothing; for having been all my life a simple honest fellow. Is it true that you are going to be a nun?"

Before Manna could reply, the gamekeeper continued: "I have also often had a desire to go into the cloister; at sixty years of age every one ought to enter the cloister; there is nothing to do but drink and drink till death proclaims the hour when the tavern is closed. But I don't want to think of death. I say, like the steward at Mattenheim: 'Lord, when Thou wilt—I am not yet in any hurry.'"

Even at this early hour, the gamekeeper had an excited and hesitating manner, and Manna was afraid of him, nevertheless she held out her hand to him and went on with the dogs.

"I have one request to make!" cried the gamekeeper, running after her.

Manna stopped. He came up to her and said that the wine-gauger had given him a ticket in the Dombau Lottery, but that he had sold it to the "Seven Pipers," and if after all the ticket brought the prize, he should be ready to tear all the hair from his head, and would not have another quiet hour with his children; he

begged Manna therefore to give him three shillings, that he might buy his ticket back again.

He added roguishly: "And it is really also for a good cause, and is befitting for you."

Manna did not understand what he meant by this; but he proceeded to explain that it was a lottery established for the enlargement of a cathedral. She gave the gamekeeper the desired money and walked hastily away. Manna entered the park, and, seating herself on her solitary chair under the weeping ash, it occurred to her why she had yesterday behaved so rudely to Eric.

She resolved to say to him the next time they met: "Do not think that because you are dependent, I presumed in such a manner." At this moment Eric was wandering alone through the park, determining in his own mind to say to Manna when next they met: "I do not like our intercourse to begin with ill-humour or misunderstanding."

Manna heard steps approaching and looked up: it was Eric who was walking that way. She remained seated. He approached and bowed to her, and neither of the two said the words they had silently resolved upon. Eric brought out stammeringly that a teacher was easily tempted to place himself in the mind of others, even in cases which did not become him. There was a tone of vexation in his voice, and Manna felt as if she had nothing to say in return. Both were silent, and nothing was heard but the singing of the birds. At length Manna said: "Tell me about Roland. How is he?"

"Roland possesses industry, perseverance, and truth; that is a moral foundation of rock, on which to build securely."

Involuntarily Manna raised her prayer-book with both her hands as if it were a shield.

Eric fancied he felt what this movement indicated, and he said: "It delights me especially in Roland that he has his own view of things and trusts in his own eyes."

A feeling akin to pain thrilled through her, as Prancken's words occurred to her. Was this behaviour of Eric's that which Prancken had called "impressing every one with his honesty?"

Roland, Prancken, and Sonnenkamp came past, and Manna rose quickly and taking Roland's hand walked with him to the villa. Prancken said at once that he had also been at church, but that he thought it his duty not to disturb Manna by a morning greeting.

"Dear child," interrupted Sonnenkamp, "you have to congratulate Herr von Prancken, he has been made lord in waiting." Manna congratulated, and Prancken gave a cheerful turn to the conversation by remarking what a contrast it was to have been a peasant in the summer and a lord in waiting in the winter. He also said that the Prince this summer would drink the waters at Karlsbad. Sonnenkamp replied that the physician had prescribed these waters for him, as more beneficial than Vichy. It seemed like the links of a chain when Prancken further remarked that his brother-in-law Clodwig and his sister Bella intended also to visit Karlsbad this summer.

Scarcely arrived in her father's house, Manna saw herself at once transported in imagination to the gay life of a watering place. Prancken then informed them that he should take the white horse with him to Wolfsgarten, in order to break it thoroughly for Manna. Her protest that she had no longer any desire to mount

a horse was silenced authoritatively by her father, but Prancken managed to interpret Sonnenkamp's imperious tone as a jest. He now bid farewell with warmth, and rode up the road at a sharp trot, the sparks flying out from beneath his horse's hoofs; the groom behind him led the little snow-white horse by a halter.

It seemed to Manna like an allegory that she should once more be seated on horseback, before she should lay aside all the trifles of the world and live only in the thought of eternity. Manna had arranged a fixed daily routine which she adhered to as though it were the rule of an order, and this strictness of character exercised an influence over the whole house. With her mother, she had a hard battle, in the first place as regarded her dress, for Frau Ceres, who always changed her attire several times in the day, desired the same of Manna; she was accustomed, however, to dress in the morning for the whole day, and the services of a maid were repugnant to her. She remained in her morning dress, and it seemed to her suitable to their higher life that nuns should wear always the same attire; thus all expenditure of thought on the outward appearance was prevented.

Since her return from the convent, Manna, had she chosen honestly to confess it, had had most delight in having her dogs back again. In fact, she had written a letter to the Lady Superior, in which she had asked whether a dog would be admitted at the convent; she had, however, burned the letter, for she pictured to herself how ridiculous it would be, to see a nun with a dog behind her walking through the garden, and still more, if every nun had her own dog. For the first time she smiled to herself, though the question arose in her mind: Why have we no animals in the convent?

Eric found her as she was sitting on the bench, talking to her dogs.

"Do you not think," she asked, "that a dog of this kind has an indescribably mournful expression of face?"

"Any one who looks for it, sees it. The mystics say that it comes from the Fall of Man; since then all creatures have an elegiac expression."

Manna thanked him, but not with words, only with her eyes. A carriage was heard approaching; a white handkerchief was waved in the distance and Lina called out Manna's name. Eric walked away. Manna went towards Lina, who alighted and ordered the carriage to drive on. She said she had received permission to stay with Manna; that her parents had accepted Albert, but that for the present it was to be kept secret. Lina was always merry when she was not under the admonishing eye of her mother: her heart was just now overflowing with joy, and she exclaimed: "Only think, Manna, how silly I have been; I once persuaded myself that Baron von Prancken liked me—no, I didn't really believe that, but I persuaded myself that I liked him. Do you know Albert? You must know him, he is building the castle up yonder. At the time of the musical festival—I saw you at once and signed to you, but you did not observe me—it was then for the first time that we mutually understood each other. Oh! you cannot imagine how happy I am. At first I could not at all sing with the rest, I was always afraid I should sing too loud, but I did sing with them then. Oh! it was so beautiful—so beautiful! we seemed floating in sound; and he sings also very splendidly, though, of course, not so magnificently as Herr Dournay. Tell me, Manna, how did you feel when you heard him sing? Did you know that he was the

man you asked me about that day when you were dressed as an angel?"

Lina did not wait for an answer, but she went on: "You saw me, of course, on the bank of the river, when I met you for the first time with my arm in Albert's. I did not like to speak to you among all those nuns and schoolfellows, and I should not have been able to have told you everything. You were not vexed with me, were you, that I behaved as if I had not seen you? Ah! I saw everything; and everything was so beautiful! And at dinner it was all so merry! He asked me once why I suddenly looked so sad. Then I told him I had been thinking of you, how you were going back again to the convent, and that it was so still there and so damp, one would think the cloisters had a constant cold. Oh, why can you not be as merry as we are? Be merry. There is nothing better. And you have everything you wish for in the world. Do be merry. Believe me, if you were one of those women, now carrying the coals of that vessel ashore—the nuns wouldn't want you. You might be just as clever, and dear, and good, as you now are. Isn't it true they persuade you that you are called to be a saint? Don't believe it. When I hear people say how beautiful it is on the convent island, I always think; 'Yes, yes, very beautiful to pass it by on a pleasure party: but to be a nun there!' Oh, Manna, if I could only give you some of my happiness! Be merry too! Oh, God! why cannot one give some of one's mirth to another! I have so much—so much! And I would like best to give it to you. Come, catch me! Do you remember our old game: all that have wings, fly? Come, catch me!"

Lina ran away with her dress fluttering, but when she stopped, she saw that Manna was not following

her. She waited till Manna came up to her, and then both girls walked quietly together towards the villa.

The wrestling and struggling to which the girl's young nature had been exposed, was evident to Frau Dournay. They were sitting in the garden one day, having declined going on the Rhine with Lina, Roland, and Eric, and Manna said, looking timidly round: "Why should it be a sin to rejoice in the beauties of nature?"

Frau Dournay did not answer immediately, and Manna urged: "Speak, please speak."

"A man," replied Frau Dournay, "whom you would probably not reverence as much as we do, has uttered these words: "God loves to see a joyful heart more than a contrite one."

"Who is the man?"

"Lessing."

Manna begged for the passage. She declared herself strong enough to study the thoughts of this so-called worldly genius, without yielding to their influence. The professor's widow warned her, and exhorted her repeatedly, but Manna persisted in saying that she had returned to the world in order to acquaint herself with all that it offered, and then freely to renounce it. She declared her firm resolution not to be Prancken's wife, nor any man's wife; she was very near disclosing to Frau Dournay that she desired to sacrifice herself for another's crime, and that this sacrifice, by the favour of heaven, was a voluntary one, loosening her from all worldly ties. "To you," she said, with a tearful eye—"to you I could tell everything."

It needed but a word, an encouraging appeal, and Manna had told the widow everything. But Frau

Dournay spoke cautiously, weighing every word. She wished Manna to have no idea that she knew the secret already; she only gave her to understand that she approved of her resolve to take the veil.

The mistrust planted in the convent was again awakened in Manna's mind. This woman, she thought, only agreed with her to make the more sure of her. But when she looked up and gazed in the calm, peaceful countenance of Frau Dournay, she was very near falling on her neck and begging for forgiveness for the unjust thoughts she had entertained respecting her.

Manna went regularly to church; she prayed with the same fervour, but a peculiar feeling of timidity kept her away from the pastor's house. She constantly said to herself that the pastor had said she might absent herself from him for some time, and enter into the life around her. Often in the midst of her conversation with Frau Dournay, she would be overcome with a dread that she was entwining herself in another existence; but she fancied herself able to regain the power of looking beyond all the things of this world. At length she roused herself, and visited the priest. He received her kindly, and said she must feel like a being who, having departed this life, again returns to it, and after having gazed on the glories of eternity, now sees how men are living—how they spend restless days, and lull themselves by night with heavy dreams.

He inculcated upon her to look at her fellow-men with mildness; the worst were those who believed they knew what they were doing; to pardon these was the most difficult of all. But it was just on the highest grounds, he went on to say, that these must be forgiven, for, in spite of their wisdom, they know not

what they do, and we can therefore always say of them: "Lord, forgive them. Nothing is left for us but to pray for the welfare of their soul, and to implore God in His mercy to grant them salvation."

Manna looked out of the window; her eye wandered to her father's house, the park, and garden, and it seemed to her as if it must all be submerged in a second flood. She saw the waters of the Rhine rising, and deluging the land.—Here, in this room alone was the ark of Noah.

Timidly, scarcely breathing out the words, Manna lamented, or, rather, asked why it was imposed upon her thus to return back into life.

The pastor comforted her. As here from this very window, he said, an eye was looking upon everything below, an eye that would soon be dimmed, so an imperishable Eye was watching over her; she was to resign herself to life without a fear, but to bear about within her the thought that she despised it all, and felt it far removed from her. This was the trial imposed upon her. He went even further, and wished that Manna should not visit him for some time; she was to remain weeks, indeed months, away from him; she was outwardly to have no binding vow, not even that of a constantly-recurring visit to him; all was to be her free and independent will; without the help of others, standing by herself alone, she was to conquer.

Manna timidly inquired why the priest had not taken into his own hand the work of benevolence which Frau Dournay was so extensively carrying on for her father.

"Why not?" exclaimed the priest, and his eye sparkled. "We can take nothing in hand which is not given us; and worldlings have got to learn that

so-called benevolence, without the blessing of the Church, vanishes into nothing. Do not mix yourself up in it, for you can have no fellowship here. Hold fast, you have come here not to convert others, but to know yourself."

Manna was deeply alarmed when the priest went on to say that he did not think she was fitted to take the veil — that it would be better for her to become Prancken's wife. A blush suffused her countenance; she made an averting movement with both her hands, but she could not utter a word.

Manna little thought how they were trifling with her. Sometimes one, sometimes another strengthened her in the idea of taking the veil, in order then to make a marriage with Prancken appear as a means of deliverance, and to bind her to lasting gratitude. In fact, frequently the very same people represented to her sometimes one thing and sometimes another as her true vocation.

"Well," said the pastor soothingly, as he laid his hand on her head—"well, if you can overcome that also, all the better; but we do not call you, we do not beguile you, you alone must call yourself—must lead yourself. People will come and insinuate to you that the priests have seduced you with their most cunning devices. I have impressed it upon you that you are not to renounce life. If you cannot do otherwise, you must do it of your own free will, then you will be welcome to us, but only then."

The priest rose, and walked up and down the room hastily. Manna sat shuddering on the sofa.

Presently the ecclesiastic turned to her and said—

"You will perceive how highly we honour you in leaving everything to your own power—the power of

faith and renunciation which you possess. And now let us talk freely and cheerfully together. Do you not think Herr Dournay a fascinating man? Speak openly and truly, as if you were speaking with yourself."

"I can scarcely say at present; I fancy there is that in him which could make him a noble instrument of the Holy Spirit."

"Really? You think so? It is the art of the tempter that he assumes the form of purity, and makes the duty and hope of conversion so alluring, that the poor child of man does not observe that he has fallen into the snare. So he assumes this form in your mind? I advise you to try to convert this forger to the truth. Try it, and when you have accomplished, you will be greater than I imagined; and if you fail, you are cured for ever. Wise is the way of Providence, who brought this man under your notice, and planted in your heart the thought that you could convert him. Yet no! Believe me, this is not your task. These self-beholders are but short-sighted mortals."

He paused, and then said, smiling—"Imagine to yourself a man whose sight does not reach far enough for him to see the stars, and you are talking to him of the glory of the starry sky. These so-called educated men see nothing but themselves in the mirror, their eye reaches no further—they cannot see God."

Again the priest walked quickly up and down. Manna felt that she had nothing more to say; she felt also as if she knew not how she could return home again—how she could again meet the eyes of her fellow-creatures who were to appear to her as shadows and as the tempter in disguise.

The pastor turned to her with a soft tone, and said—"Now go, my child. God be with you."

He blessed her, and Manna went away.

With an intense effort to regard life merely as a game, and as a temptation, from which she might not withdraw herself, Manna devoted herself to those around her.

CHAPTER II.

NO one but his mother guessed that a change had taken place in Eric. Formerly so communicative, he now, especially in Manna's presence, observed the utmost circumspection, as if he felt himself in the vicinity of a being who was not to be awakened or disturbed. Soon after the change in Eric's behaviour was perceived by another and more watchful eye. Bella came to visit her future sister-in-law. She had a habit with girls on whom she bestowed her favour of putting her arm round their waists, and so walking up and down with them, but whenever she attempted this with Manna, the latter always made a movement as if to shake her off—indeed, she at length told Bella plainly that it was painful to her. Bella smiled, but in her heart she felt indignant. In this house—in this garden to feel herself repelled, had seemed to her impossible. She manifested, however, no annoyance.

Manna excused herself for not returning Bella's kindness, but said it was her intention to pay no visits. Bella only stayed a little while with Frau Dournay and Claudine, and then she returned to Wolfsgarten, inwardly resolving that henceforth she would treat the house and all within it as if they did not exist. If Otto chose to fetch a wife from here, that was his affair. She felt herself obliged, however, to draw her brother's attention to the fact that in the mutual

reserve manifested by Manna and Eric, there lay the germ of a deeper connexion between them. Prancken answered with a touch of maliciousness, that the tutor was not so dangerous by far as he appeared to his sister, especially to a nature standing fast in the faith. Prancken travelled a good deal backwards and forwards, and whenever he came he brought animation with him. Still it did not escape Manna's eye that there was something unsettled and desultory about him; and this was all the more apparent when Eric was present.

Prancken was always ready with a sarcastic word, but he could not discuss a matter at length. He felt that he often appeared insipid and barren, and it irritated him. Conversation became to him a sort of anxiety, and in the midst of his exhibition of friendliness, there lurked a bitter hostility. He fancied now that he could discover an agreement between Eric and Manna. To Manna, as well as to Eric, general views superseded all personal ones; in her it was the result of religion, in him of knowledge. At first Manna had behaved with strangeness and indifference, indeed with a kind of defiance as to an adversary; but by degrees she perceived the unbiassed power of truth that distinguished his character. When Prancken disputed, he always uttered his assertions as if everything he said were irrefutable. Eric, on the contrary, always endeavoured in the first place to aim at a just investigation as the best means of arriving at the real result.

It often seemed between the two men as if they were fighting as in a tournament in Manna's presence for the prize. In such a state of feeling, it was easy for insignificant events to become the starting point for fiery combat. This was the case one day when Prancken

was relating merrily that there would be a pilgrimage on that day of all the country round to the railway station, as the evening train was expected to bring the list of the Dombau lottery, and all the poor people, servant lads, maids, vine-dressers, stone-breakers, and sailors were hoping for the prize. Manna had it on her lips to say that she had given money to the game-keeper to pay for his ticket, but she did not do so, for Eric could not restrain himself from calling out: "This lottery is a monstrous thing, the shame of our age."

"How? What do you mean?"

Eric endeavoured to change the subject, but Manna said: "May we not know what is your repugnance to this institution?"

"I do not like to express it."

"Captain," urged Prancken, "will you not do us the favour to give us your opinion? It would be very good of you to inform us on the matter, and to explain your repugnance to it."

Eric felt the provocation, but he had self-command enough to answer with calm deliberation: "Above all, I beg you to keep in view that Catholic as well as Protestant cathedrals are to be enlarged by this horrible means."

"Why so horrible?" asked Manna.

"Well, go on, go on," urged Prancken.

"Allow me time," replied Eric, "I must go back a little."

"Go on, go on!" urged Prancken, twisting the ends of his moustache.

"The greatest cathedrals," began Eric, "are unfinished; thousands and thousands of hands are resting on the lap of earth, who once, incited by devotion, hewed, uplifted, chiselled, and fitted their stones. Of

course there were careless workers among them, but devotion had placed the work in motion, the devotion of those who expended the money, and the devotion of the workmen, who wished to build a house of God. Now, however, there is a proclamation issued to the serving lad, to the maid, and to the journeyman: 'Come here, here is a lottery ticket, it only costs a thaler, you may gain thousands by it, and besides, you are helping to build a church!' How can the Holy Scriptures be proclaimed in a building which has been raised by man's love of gain? You smile, you think it does no harm to the lad or to the maid, that they should lose a thaler; but I ask, does it not hurt their souls, that they looked for lottery gain? How would it be, if in the corner-stone of the new building a lottery plan were inserted? The generations of future centuries would have more difficulty in deciphering it, than we have in the remains of pileworks. 'What sort of generation could this have been,' they would ask, 'who built a church on lottery gains?' Tetzel's indulgences were less of a contradiction; money was given then for expiation of sins, and though there was a mistaken moral motive, still it was a moral motive. But here—"

"I should have thought," interposed Sonnenkamp, "that you regarded the beautiful in itself, the execution of a beautiful building, as a moral motive."

"A church," replied Eric, "cannot merely be regarded as a beautiful work of art, apart from the object of devotion, and this spirit of devotion would be deeply injured; it is a contradiction to apply unholy means for a holy object; and what is unsuitable is innately ugly."

Prancken was both angry and perplexed, for he saw

that Manna was looking thoughtful. What would he have felt, had he had an idea of what was passing in her mind? The heretic Eric, with all his philosophy, could have attacked no dogma that she held; there was no lever which could move a steadfast rock; but now in attacking an apparently subordinate matter, he had shaken her confidence in the moral standard of those who represented to her mind the spiritual world. All that concerned religion, was fixed and decided, but it occurred to her that they were striving after money. She despised money as a dangerous enemy, and "money, money!" rang through her brain. "Was money the tempter?"

Prancken roused himself to speak: "I think any one who does not belong to the faith, ought never to attack another's form of faith."

"Ought we not?" replied Eric. "And yet *we* are attacked. Humility is a virtue, but it is the virtue of the besieged. I know we have no fixed formula to produce. We are still stammering over the words of salvation. But is the child, because it cannot speak, not therefore to declare its wishes by plaintive accents?"

"This same religion," interposed Prancken, "which has built the cathedrals, has also proclaimed to the world the precept of love. Is this also an abomination to you?"

Eric calmly replied: "High and sacred to us is the precept of love and of purification of the heart, but love is the impulse of the heart, and must be regulated and trained. Those grand words, 'Love thy neighbour as thyself,' have become hypocrisy, and man says, 'I love my neighbour, but I have nothing to do for him.' Our doctrine is this: 'Help thy neighbour as thyself.' Love is a kind of musical feeling which can be feigned,

help cannot; hence we carry the expression further, 'Help thy neighbour as thyself,' and thou must do it thyself, for we rest on the principle that there is no substitute in the kingdom of morality, the primeval law is universal duty."

"You have said that before," interposed Prancken.

"I think that we have the same right as those who are opposed to us, and who also do not always adduce new statements. The sunlight of to-day is like that of yesterday, and—"

Roland just then rushed breathlessly in, exclaiming: "Eric, you must come directly, the gamekeeper is here, he is almost beside himself, and says you alone are to decide."

"What has happened then?"

"The Seven Pipers' ticket drew a prize, and the gamekeeper says that the money belongs to him. Come, he is quite furious."

Eric went into the courtyard. The gamekeeper was sitting there on a kennel, and looked up woefully at Eric and Roland; he spoke so confusedly, that his hearers were but little the wiser; only so far was evident, that the Seven Pipers had won the money, and that the gamekeeper asserted it belonged to him.

Sonnenkamp, Prancken, and Manna also appeared on the steps, and now the gamekeeper declared that Manna must bear witness that she had given him the money for the ticket, and that he had only forgotten to buy it back again. Eric endeavoured to calm him and promised to accompany him to the Seven Pipers; he begged Sonnenkamp's permission to have the carriage for the purpose. Roland urged to be allowed to go with him. The gamekeeper seated himself on the box

beside the coachman, and thus they drove to the village to the Seven Pipers.

In front of the house they met the cellarman, who told Eric that the Seven Pipers had just turned him out of the house, as he could now look out for another husband for his daughter, and that at any rate he would not give her to the son of the gamekeeper, who wanted to dispute his possession before all the world.

"Is it true, father, that the ticket belonged to you?"

"Yes, certainly, and it belongs to me still."

"I understand it all," said the cellarman, and walked away.

The newly arrived found great confusion in the Seven Pipers' house; the eldest daughter was weeping, and the other children were running about helter-skelter.

At last some quiet was obtained. The Seven Pipers said: "He was not going to disturb himself at present, but that certainly he should no longer work in the vineyards, and that meanwhile for a year he should do nothing at all; it would then be seen what he had better do." The children jumped about and rejoiced together, the Seven Pipers called them and told them to sing, but none of them would begin; that was over now. Eric said that the gamekeeper was waiting in front of the house. Scarcely had he said this, than the Seven Pipers threw open the window and called to his former comrade in the street: "If you don't go away directly, and if you once again demand a single farthing of me, I will beat your bones to pieces. Now you know what you will get!"

No persuasion availed, the Seven Pipers persisted that he would not give the gamekeeper so much as a single atom. Roland and Eric went sadly away. They came to the gamekeeper's house and found him lying on

a bench, sleeping. The wife said he had come home thoroughly intoxicated, and the cellarman also had seemed quite confused. Here also Roland and Eric could offer no help.

One day, Manna, Prancken, Roland, Eric, and Sonnenkamp, were riding along the beautiful road shaded with nut-trees. Manna, who was riding in front with her father and Prancken, patted her pretty white horse, and Prancken was delighted that the horse showed itself worthy of its mistress. Presently they saw a procession approaching. Manna drew in her rein so suddenly that she was nearly thrown from her horse. She alighted, and Eric and Roland alighted also. The grooms led the horses aside; Manna joined the procession, singing with the pilgrims, and Prancken also sang loudly. At a chapel by the road-side Manna knelt down, and Prancken knelt beside her. It was not till she rose that she saw that Prancken alone was by her, and that the others had left her; they were waiting at a cross-road near the grooms who were holding the horses.

The procession moved on; Manna and Prancken were alone; in the distance they still caught the murmuring voices of the pilgrims. Prancken kept his hands clasped and looked at Manna as if in prayer.

"Manna," he began—he called her so for the first time—"Manna, so shall our life be! We will acknowledge the favour of heaven in bestowing on us wealth and noble name, but we will be ready at any moment to unite with our brothers and sisters, who make their holy pilgrimage in thick shoes and barefoot. Manna, so will we live!"

He seized her hand, she let him hold it for a second, then she withdrew it, and he continued: "I have never

yet told you, that I also am wrestling with the resolve to renounce the world. You have wrestled, grandly and piously, and you have returned to the world; I place my heart, my soul, my salvation in your hand—go with me into the chapel."

He seized her hand, but at this moment Eric called out: "Fräulein Manna!"

"What is the matter? What do you want?" interposed Prancken.

"Fräulein Manna, your father says that there is a convenient boundary-stone, at which you can mount your horse again."

"I shall not ride again, I shall walk home," replied Manna, and—did she know that Prancken did not follow her, or did she not know it—she went on with Eric. It was not till she had gone some way that she looked back, and when she saw Prancken sitting motionless at the spot, she called out to him to come on.

In spite of all persuasion she would not mount her horse again, but she walked the whole way in her heavy riding-habit. She did not speak, but there was a strange look of defiance in her countenance. When she reached her room, she locked her door and wept and prayed. Now was the hour of contest, and she seemed so defenceless; Prancken had a right to speak to her thus. And was it not better, perhaps, that she should belong to life? It seemed to her as if she must ask Eric how he would judge of her inconstancy. She wrestled in conflict with herself and gained but one resolve; she would no longer allow her mind to be distracted by diversion.

In the evening a boat excursion was agreed upon. Manna, who had promised to go, now refused to accompany them. She stood at the window of her room;

she did not open it, she wished it were grated. She saw the party coming down the river, Lina was singing and a fine man's voice was accompanying her song. Who was it?

It was not Prancken, nor Roland; it could only be Eric. Yonder in the boat, Lina had begged that Eric would sing Schubert's air of the Harper's song; Eric thought it contradictory here in a pleasant party on the Rhine to give vent to words breathed out in solitude and night by one heavily burdened with woe, but Lina persisted, and Eric sang:

"He who ne'er ate his bread with tears."

The rowers stopped, Eric's voice seemed to thrill through every heart. He made a slight pause and then began the words:

"Ye usher mortals into life,
Ye let the man pursue his crime,
Then ye resign him to his woe;
All guilt has its avenging time."

Unresolved, and musically sustained, Schubert's melody concludes like Goethe's words. As the boat glided past the villa and Manna caught the concluding words, she threw herself down and covered her face with her hands. The words rung in her ears:

"All guilt has its avenging time."

Hour after hour passed away; there was a knock at her door. Manna awoke; weary in body and overpowered in mind, she had fallen asleep. Roland and Lina called her, and as if in a dream she joined the party down stairs. It seemed to her as if it were morning, and yet it was night; she appeared to herself entrapped by all who turned to her in love.

In order to get the mastery over herself, she proposed that they should now again go on the Rhine in the moonlight. She begged Lina to sing, but she replied that she could not sing so well as Herr Dournay.

"Will you sing?" said Manna turning to Eric.

"I cannot now," he rejoined.

The first request she had made to him was flatly refused her. She was hurt at the first moment, but she was soon pleased at it. It is better so, she thought, he is nothing to me: and I must regain my right position with him. And to show that she had not been wounded by his ungraciousness, she was more cheerful than ever.

When the row was over, Sonnenkamp went towards them as they were ascending the slope, and announced that the Seven Pipers had communicated to him in confidence that the sailors for whom he had established a benevolent fund, wished to tender him their thanks.

"A house without a daughter is like a meadow without flowers," said the major on the following day, as he was standing with Frau Dournay and Sonnenkamp watching the young people playing *les graces* on the meadow which led from the villa to the green cottage. Lina had induced Manna to take part in the game, and in combination with the maid she had also prevailed on her to wear a light-coloured summer dress, and a dark red velvet bow in her hair, which became her rich black plaits. The young people stood in a large circle, throwing the gaily twisted hoops into the air and catching them again on the small sticks.

The architect was also present; he had been invited at Manna's special request, though no one but herself and Lina knew why she urged it.

Roland had begged Eric to play also; he refused at first, but Lina drew him into the circle, saying—"Any one who doesn't play wears a wig, and is afraid of betraying it."

Prancken used his stick in an almost military manner, as if it were a sword. There was a good deal of laughing and springing on the meadow, and it was

a pleasure to see Roland's beautiful movements, and still more Manna's. When she looked up, and stretched out an arm, it seemed as if her eye were directed to something beyond—as if she were standing in an ecstasy, not riveted there by her falling hoop, but by some heavenly apparition. Prancken had placed himself on her right, Eric on her left; Prancken threw so skilfully, that she always caught his hoop, while Eric, on the contrary, threw either too high or too low, and she had always to stoop to pick up the fallen hoop. Roland and Lina laughed at his awkwardness, but it almost seemed as if he did it intentionally, for the movement exhibited Manna's grace. Presently, as Eric rushed forward to catch a missing hoop thrown by Manna, he fell his whole length on the meadow. Manna laughed aloud.

Scarcely had Lina heard this, than she clapped her hands, exclaiming—"The spell is broken! the princess is released! Captain, you have released her! Manna was the princess who cannot laugh. How shall we call the knight who has released her?"

Eric was ready to make a joke of his disaster.

Never had Manna's cheeks glowed so rosily as on this day; the ban which lay upon her seemed removed; one single laugh, deep, hearty, and childishly full, had given her animation.

Lina went up to Herr Sonnenkamp, and said—

"Noble prince! the knight who has made the princess laugh must have his fame spread through all lands by the king's herald, from the tower of Lichtenburg."

They returned to the villa. Lina had hung her hat on a bush, and the architect carried it to her, stroking the brown knot of ribands, and looking at the brown

plait and the artistic autumn-coloured vine leaves. He gave Lina her hat, and they pressed each other's hands beneath it. The architect said he must go again to the castle, to make arrangements for the following day. Lina looked for one second thoughtfully after him, then she sprang quickly up the garden steps into the music-hall, placed herself at the piano, and played a dance, for to-day was not to pass without dancing also. When Prancken jestingly asked Manna to be his partner, Lina jumped up from the piano. "No, that won't do. First comes the knight of Fallen Philosophy, who broke the spell."

Lina would not hear of anything else; Manna must first dance with Eric. Claudine was ready to play, so that Lina might dance also. With a roguish courtesy she invited Herr von Prancken to be her partner, and she danced with him behind Eric and Manna.

"I cannot conceive that I am dancing," said Manna, as she turned on Eric's arm round and round through the large hall.

"Nor I," replied Eric.

Claudine was obliged to go on playing, for Prancken asked Manna to dance; she was a little out of breath, and he held her hand for a minute before he led her into the circle. Roland danced with Lina, and would not stop.

Sonnenkamp told Frau Dournay how well everything had fitted—that he had never thought his child from the convent would be dancing before him in that hall. He had sent for Frau Ceres, as she would like to see it also. She came, and then Prancken and Manna were obliged to dance again.

After supper Lina wished that they should dance again; she wished that for one day they need not go

to sleep at all. She had given new life to the whole house, and, above all, to Manna. She was so full of overflowing merriment, that even Eric, who had hitherto regarded her with indifference, approached her with friendliness.

"Yes," said she, "do you remember that day? Did you then think you would dance with that winged being? Isn't she a divine creature? Oh! if you do but see her merry again. I like to think how you will be in love with Manna . . . so in love—so frightfully in love! Will you promise me something?"

"What is it?"

"That you will tell me the first day you are in love."

"But supposing I fall in love with you?"

"Oh, never mind—I am far too stupid for you; I should have been clever enough for Herr von Prancken, but I am provided for and done with. Has Manna told you nothing about me? Have you guessed nothing?"

Eric said he had not, and Lina continued—"Do it for my sake, and snatch Manna away from Baron Prancken."

"What are you laughing about so?" said Manna, as she joined them at these words.

"Tell her," said Lina.

As Eric was silent, she continued—"He can tell you, but he is terribly reserved and shy. Manna, leave him no rest till he tells you. Captain Dournay, if you do not say it directly, I will say it."

"I have too much confidence in you," replied Eric, gravely, "to believe that you would wantonly turn a jest into the contrary."

Lina's expression changed, and she said—"Oh! Manna, he is frightfully learned. My father says so

also, that he can see people through and through. Are you not, too, sometimes afraid of him?"

Without giving an answer, Manna took Lina's arm and went with her through the garden, and Lina chattered, and jested, and sang by turns.

When Manna was at length alone in her room, it seemed to her as if the pictures on the wall were looking at her, and asking, "Who art thou?" She cast her eyes down before the mute pictures; then she threw herself on her knees, and something said within her, "It must be so—thou must know all the vain pleasures of life in order to overcome them." But in her contrite prayer she heard the sound of the merry waltzing and the joyous laughter. Was it the pleasure of life that was roused within her, or was it something else?

On the following day she was obliged to take part in new amusements. They went to the castle, where the architect had prepared a bowl of May wine with a kind of formal seriousness. The party sat on a projection of the castle, looking over the vast landscape, and Lina was so happy, that she sang the merriest Tyrolese songs. She sang in the open air almost better than in a room, and besides, she had a good accompaniment, for she sang a duet with the architect.

Here also Eric was asked to sing, and here also he declined. Lina succeeded in making Manna present the May wine and drink first from the festooned cup. She said, jestingly, that she should like to be able to bring back the old Manna—or, more truly, the young Manna. The old spirits seemed inclined to return, but still Manna had power enough to restrain herself, though she laughed to-day at Lina's smallest jest.

Roland nodded to Eric, but the latter told him

softly that he ought not to draw attention to Manna's cheerfulness, as it might disturb it.

Garlands were twined, and Lina related Eric's first appearance at Wolfsgarten. The evening star twinkled in the sky, as, with crowned heads, they returned from the castle to the villa. At the last declivity Manna sprang quickly down the hill; Lina followed her, and at the bottom of the hill Lina embraced her friend, and said—

"The spell is broken! You have done the three best things in the world—you have laughed, danced, and drank. . . . No, they are not the best, after all—the best is to come."

Manna remained silent.

CHAPTER III.

WHAT does one do on the morning of a day when one knows that in the evening one is to receive an act of homage? Sonnenkamp knew that on this day the sailors, for whose benefit he had established a widows' fund, were going to offer him their formal thanks. He looked at the barometer. It had rained, and now the barometer was going up; it was clearing again, and the fête would go off satisfactorily.

Sonnenkamp wished he knew the address to be given in the evening, as he could then have prepared a suitable answer. It is good for princes, he thought, an address which is to be delivered to them is always laid before them previously. Sonnenkamp had a confident feeling, however, that suitable words would suggest themselves at the moment. He had never cared for the honour of men, he had given honour to himself, so far as honour was necessary. Was he now to be dependent? and with what had this honour been gained?

With money!

Had he not that in superfluity, they would not have troubled themselves about him.

He rode out at his usual time, but he did not ride his usual way; he looked graciously at the people who met him: a fresh sense of satisfaction had been aroused in him. He rode towards the castle.

Not far from it he turned towards the wood, for he

saw over the parapet of the one nearly-finished tower a great flag flying, and there were no men to be seen anywhere. He went through the wood, leading his horse by the bridle.

On his way back he took the major with him, and begged him to remain. The major had something of the feeling of a bridesman, who has prepared everything for the wedding, and then withdraws with the bridegroom into a quiet room, to wait till the burst of music summons him.

In the afternoon the privy counsellor's family, and the sheriff with his wife, and the doctor, arrived. The major who had absented himself for a short time, now appeared with all his orders. Many others came, and even the young widow, Herr von Endlich's daughter; she had gone into the country for a few weeks in the summer. Prancken had invited the neighbourhood—he knew that this extension of his fame would be very agreeable to Herr Sonnenkamp. They all, however, only arrived as if by chance, and Sonnenkamp submitted to this social lie.

Prancken was especially attentive to the beautiful young widow; he was glad when he once caught a look from Manna's eye—he wished her to see to what temptations and attractions he was exposed.

Prancken had given orders that large joints of meat and bottles of ordinary wine should be prepared for the people who were coming; he had also taken care that there should be cigars: and Sonnenkamp, who knew of everything, behaved as if he saw and heard nothing.

When the evening came on, Prancken, in the presense of all, begged the father—he always called him so with emphasis in the presence of others—to remain in his own room until he was summoned. Submitting

with a bashful, modest, and patient air, Sonnenkamp retired to his room.

Large tables were now placed in the court-yard, and covered with refreshments, the sound of music was heard on the Rhine, and the vessels and pleasure-boats came into view. They stopped in front of the villa and arranged themselves in order, and torches and gay lamps, suspended like burning garlands, lighted up the vessels.

Sonnenkamp was alone in his room; he had a dread of this act of homage, although he had called it forth. What if one word should be unexpectedly uttered? No, it could not be.

Steps now approached; it was the major and the sheriff. The major said that they had come to bear him company. Sonnenkamp thanked them, and went on smoking silently; he held his cigar as delicately as if he were humble even to it. He begged his friends to excuse him for not talking just now; he had lived so many years in a foreign world, that now it almost oppressed him to have found a home in so many honest hearts beyond what he deserved; for he had really given them nothing but paltry money. The sheriff was on the point of replying, but the major signed deprecatingly. At such moments, he intimated to him him, in a whisper, one must let a man speak with some exaggeration; it is enough to listen to him.

Several heavy footsteps now approached; Prancken opened the door, and said,

"Go in, men."

A deputation of the sailors entered, and begged Herr Sonnenkamp to permit them to offer him a token of gratitude. With eyes cast down he descended the garden steps, and walked towards the park, between

the brightly attired sailors, and here a beautiful sight opened before him.

The sailors were standing in the gaily dressed ships, and began a chorus that sounded far in the distance. With folded hands Sonnenkamp stood there and looked at them, then he unclasped his hands and rubbed the ring on the thumb of his right hand, as it caused him pain. The song was finished; hurras were shouted in honour of their great benefactor; small guns were fired, and the echo reverberated from the hills, sending a sound like thunder, far away up and down the river.

Sonnenkamp thanked them in a short speech; Roland was standing at his right, Manna at his left. He placed his hand on his son's shoulder, and thus concealed his thumb; with his other hand he held Manna's, and he concluded with the request that his good neighbours would confer their affection also upon these his children.

The crews now disembarked. With music playing, the sailors marched through the park, towards the tables, which had been placed for their entertainment. Sonnenkamp ordered that the seats should be removed.

"They must not sit," he said to Prancken; "I had imagined you would have thought of that. Make the people go away soon. The lower classes are not to be trusted. They deteriorate. Let the wine be taken to the vessels—there they may be as wild as they like."

An hurra for Frau Sonnenkamp was raised at the first glass.

Sonnenkamp thanked them in her name from the garden steps; he regretted that his wife was unwell, and could not take part in the entertainment. He begged the men to be very quiet, as she was very sensitive. The merriment was therefore suppressed. Eric

led the men back again to the boats, and they rowed away; the band played and the guns were fired, and soon it was all silent again at the villa.

The circle of friends were gathered in the large saloon. The major remarked,

"All this must appear in the paper by some good writer. You, comrade," he said, turning to Eric, "you would of course give it beautifully. Say nothing, you must."

Eric declared that he was not going to refuse, for that he had himself wished to carry out the major's wish.

The major went to Frau Dournay and told her that Eric had sung with the men; he regretted that Fräulein Milch had not witnessed the beautiful entertainment, but she was stubborn with regard to everything that concerned the Sonnenkamp family; he could not explain it to himself, for she was generally so good to every one. Frau Dournay knew why Fräulein Milch had withdrawn. She had seen the man and his children, and the whole party, and she could not refrain from thinking how it would be, if it had not been the shouts of homage that had awoke the echoes of the night, but if another cry had spread over mountain and valley.

The party dispersed. Roland and Eric accompanied Frau Dournay home. Roland was full of happiness at this universal honour, and Eric impressed upon him again what a blessing it was to be able to make other people happy.

"What is the matter with your mother, she was so sad the whole evening?" said Roland on the way home.

"She is no longer disposed for joy," replied Eric.

That very night he wrote an enthusiastic account

of the charitable fund and the entertainment, and sent it to the capital to Professor Crutius. Two days after the paper was sent to the villa. Sonnenkamp thanked Eric for his animated notice, and Roland said: "Give me the paper, I will keep it as a lasting remembrance."

A second notice appeared in the official paper, and Prancken modestly confessed that he was its author. What Eric had written was certainly good, but this account would reach the eye of the prince, and that was more important, and would soon produce results.

The privy counsellor's wife proved herself grateful, for she showed Sonnenkamp a letter of her husband's, in which the latter mentioned that the prince had read the notice of the charity with great satisfaction. The prince expressed his intention of visiting Sonnenkamp's villa, and his famous hothouses, and fruit-gardens. This was of course at present to be a secret, but still she thought it as well to inform Sonnenkamp of it. He sent back a request that he should have a telegraphic notice of the prince's visit.

He now seemed to himself chained to his possessions and the surrounding neighbourhood. He had never thought of quitting the villa before he went to the baths, but now he felt as if he should be suddenly snatched away, and that the prince would come during his absence. He gave accurate orders, and even promised a special reward for the quick despatch of any telegram arriving from the capital; but day by day passed by, and none came.

Everything was again in its quiet routine, Sonnenkamp alone was in a constant state of feverish excitement; Prancken was desirous of leaving, but Sonnenkamp begged him to stay, and in confidence communicated to him the visit he was expecting.

Prancken endured patiently Manna's refusal of any decided approximation; he was glad to see that she treated Eric with evident aversion, for Manna, ever since those days of harmless mirth, had resumed her strict self-mortification, and it was quite apparent when she met Eric that her countenance darkened.

Sonnenkamp walked restlessly about the park, the fruit-gardens, and the hothouses; and pursued with the utmost precaution his old occupation of digging up the black mould, with his sack-like dress thrown over him. He was sitting in the hothouses, lost in thought, when suddenly a scarcely audible crackling, like the rustling of a breeze, was perceptible, and Sonnenkamp exclaimed aloud: "It is open!"

The Victoria Regia had unfolded. He looked at the blossom, he was delighted, and yet he shook his head with vexation; why could it not have waited and opened at the very moment that the prince stood there? Man must learn how to control nature! He sent a carriage at once for the wife of the privy counsellor. She arrived, and found the whole house, even Frau Ceres, in astonishment at the wonderful blossom. Sonnenkamp explained to her that the Victoria Regia is snow-white on the first day of opening, that the flower closes at night and opens again on the second night, but it is then a rose-red. Every four days a fresh blossom appears, and the faded flowers sink below the water. He took the privy counsellor's wife aside and begged her at once to inform the court of the event. Now there was a definite reason for the prince's coming.

That very evening the information arrived that the prince and princess would appear on the following day; they would, however, be ill-pleased, if any preparation

was made for their visit, which they intended should appear as an accidental thing. Sonnenkamp heaved a deep sigh. If it was to be merely accidental, then the prince would not bring the patent of nobility with him, for that required preparation and various formalities. Perhaps, however, everything had been done secretly, only the privy counsellor's wife did not venture to betray it. His neighbour did not consider it probable, and so Sonnenkamp's delight was destroyed. Again and again there was something fresh to be done! It was for ever waiting and fearing! With the utmost self-command he resolved that no ill-humour or impatience should be apparent.

On the following morning, after an almost sleepless night, Sonnenkamp announced that no one was to leave the house, and almost imperatively he told Frau Ceres that she must not be ill. He went to Frau Dournay and begged her to undertake the honours of his house; he confessed to her whom he was expecting, for with her, he added, he could have no secret. The widow shuddered, and her look said: "And you venture to say that to me, to me who know——" But she constrained herself, and placed herself at Herr Sonnenkamp's disposal.

Frau Dournay wore to-day for the first time a brooch containing a crayon picture of her deceased husband; but Frau Ceres wished to put on all her ornaments, and it was difficult to convince her that she must be simply dressed. There came a telegram from the privy counsellor at the capital, to say that their royal highnesses had started. Now it was decided. Eric, Roland, and Manna were now informed. Eric wished to remain in his own room.

"You expect that you will be sent for," said Prancken sharply.

"I expect nothing but courtesy where I am conscious of no offence," retorted Eric.

Prancken gave his head a scarcely perceptible toss; to him it was a decided point: the man must go, the man had become troublesome; this tutor's family had insinuated themselves like wasps in a beehive, and nothing availed but to smoke them out. Prancken was the calm one of the party, he was lord in waiting and Baron von Prancken, and all the others were nothing but poor underlings.

No less calm than Prancken was Manna, but from very different reasons. She disapproved of it that there should be all this haste and disorder on account of the arrival of mortal beings. She was outwardly calm, but her heart was full of dread. What did all this pursuit of honour from others mean, and here especially? She ventured shyly to express the request that she might be allowed to retire. But her request was not complied with.

Prancken said she would feel at ease when the first formalities were over, and Sonnenkamp added that by the side of the prince's favourite cavalier she would receive pleasure and honour. Manna looked down; presently Roland passed. He was dressed in perfectly white summer attire. He was full of merriment, and persuaded Manna not to be fearful, as their royal highnesses were extremely courteous, and after the first few words he always felt as if he were among his comrades. Lutz had been placed on the flat roof of the house, in order to be on the look out, and he now came down, quickly exclaiming: "They are coming!"

The party dispersed, as if they had been expecting

no one. Two carriages drove into the court-yard. Sonnenkamp hastened down the garden steps, but on the lowest step he stumbled and had to support himself by the balustrade.

What was this? A black face! Was it imagination or reality?

"Come, come!" exclaimed Prancken, who had hastened after him. "Their royal highnesses are already alighting."

He reached the carriage, and had the honour of giving his hand to the prince as he got out. The princess alighted at the other side with Prancken's assistance; she spoke a few gracious words, saying how delighted she was to see the place and its possessor in his own house, from which issued so many good and benevolent works.

The princess, who took especial interest in the charitable institutions of the country, felt herself pledged to thank Sonnenkamp for his great acts of benevolence. It would have pleased her better, had his important sums of money been applied to institutions established by herself. It was a decided error on the part of Prancken, that he had not thought of this. A slight tone of ill-humour was perceptible, when the princess remarked that she was delighted whenever new charities were formed.

Frau Ceres appeared with Manna. The princess spoke a few words to her, and then told Manna that she resembled her brother but little, though her eyes were like his. She inquired after Roland.

They now saw him on the steps; he was speaking eagerly with Eric, and begging him to go with him; but Eric and his mother urged him to go forward alone.

He went, and was most kindly received by their royal highnesses.

The prince went towards the house. Frau Dournay and Eric were standing on the garden steps. With hasty step the prince went forward, and holding out both hands to her, told her how glad he was to see her again, and pointing to the crayon portrait on her brooch, added, that he preserved a grateful remembrance of her husband and carried his image in his heart. Eric seemed to have been scarcely observed; but a look from his mother drew the prince's attention to him, and turning to him, he said: "I hope, dear Dournay, you have a better pupil than your good father had in me."

Eric had no words to reply, and bowed silently. Prancken now came forward and asked: "Will your highness first see the park and the Victoria Regia in flower, or the house?"

"Ask the princess," was the reply.

With great dexterity Prancken now moved towards the other group, and caught Manna's eye, which followed him everywhere. What was Eric after all? There stands the poor fellow, thought Prancken; it is laughable to think that he is of any consequence by the side of a Prancken.

The princess said, that after her drive in the open air she should prefer going into the house.

They repaired to the balconied room, where a *déjeuner* was prepared. Sonnenkamp had the audacity to say that their royal highnesses must put up with the simple unprepared repast which a homely man could offer.

Frau Ceres had the honour of sitting on the right of the prince, he requested Frau Dournay to take that on

his left; and the princess sat between Sonnenkamp and Roland.

Eric found in one of the gentlemen of the prince's suite a former comrade, who entered into conversation with him.

"You must now soon enter the service," said the prince turning to Roland.

Sonnenkamp stared. The prince knew then when Roland was to enter. He expected every moment that the prince would sign to a gentleman in waiting, and tell him to hand him the patent of nobility, but it did not take place. The prince conversed occasionally with Frau Dournay, and expressed his regret that a lady of such nobility and wit should have retired from the court. They soon rose from table again, and Sonnenkamp was happy at the way the prince inspected everything, giving the highest praise to the hothouses, park, and artistic fruit culture. Suddenly the prince asked Frau Dournay: "Where is your sister-in-law, the beautiful Claudine?"

"She is here with us, she resides with me in the cottage which Herr Sonnenkamp has assigned to us."

"Let us visit her," said the prince.

They went through the new gate across the meadows towards the green cottage.

Claudine was surprised, but she preserved her composure. The prince said he could never hear the harp played without thinking of Fräulein Claudine with her long curls, as she sat on a stool with the harp resting against her; it was one of the favourite reminiscences of his youth, how he had seen and heard her in his mother's room; it was the fairest dream of his childhood.

He remained for some time in the green cottage, and

at length ordered that the carriages should come here that they might start at once.

Eric, who had not been asked to go with him, had remained at the villa, amusing himself with the prince's footman, a great African, named Adams, who wore a fantastic livery. The African was soon confidential. Eric learned various facts of his life. He had been a member of an equestrian company, being a bold leaper and a man of immense strength. The prince's brother, who had travelled in America, had purchased his liberty and had taken him with him to Europe. He was now the prince's favourite lacquey. As he spoke he kept looking at the villa; his rolling eye seemed seeking something. Eric was talking for the first time in his life with a man who had been a slave; the African touched his heart, and yet he could not overcome a certain sense of fear, for the negro was so restless, and seemed struggling against some feeling within him.

While Eric was talking with the negro, he was himself the subject of conversation in the green cottage. The aunt alluded to him, and told the prince what a man Eric had become. As the prince was passing to his carriage, he said aloud to Frau Dournay: "Where is your son? Tell him that I should have liked to have shown him that I remember our youthful fellowship."

The royal party drove away. The great African, who sat on the seat behind, looked back for a long distance. Sonnenkamp was thoroughly out of humour. He said to Prancken that this visit of the prince had taken an inconceivable turn; he did not understand it. He gave vent to his vexation, that he, the master of the house, had been really the least noticed; but

probably it was something else that had disturbed him.

As they were returning to the villa, Manna went up to Eric and said: "The prince left your mother a special message for you, and you are to bear in mind that you were his youthful comrade."

"The only thing that delights me in the royal favour is that you, Fräulein Manna, deliver me the message," replied Eric. They were all astonished at this familiarity between Manna and Eric. Prancken laughed scornfully at the easy effrontery of the schoolmaster.

"Where were you?" asked Sonnenkamp in a reproachful tone.

"I thought it better not to follow; meanwhile it interested me talking with the prince's servant."

Sonnenkamp looked at him strangely, and then went to his hot-houses.

Prancken announced aloud that he should now also start; he expected evidently that Manna would raise an objection, but she said nothing. So he rode away, and left behind him at the villa a strangely disturbed state of feeling.

A flash of lightning passes over the sky of night and disappears; for a moment everything is dazzlingly lighted up, but at the next, the darkness is made doubly evident. So it was when the royal party had left. Each avoided the other, and went his own way.

No one, however, expressed his disappointment more honestly than the valet Joseph, and the major-domo agreed with him; he could not, however, say much, for he had his mouth full of dainty morsels, which were being cleared away; he only nodded silently and grew very red. Joseph however said: "They haven't left behind so much as a bit of money for a servant!

What is the end of all this magnificence? Nothing! And at court the things are not better served or more richly spread. They ought to be ashamed of themselves! Not even to leave behind a fee for a servant!"

Yes, so it was.

No one, except perhaps Tante Claudine, to whom no one had given a thought, had had any real enjoyment.

Sonnenkamp pondered and speculated as to what had caused the evident change in the gracious behaviour of the prince. It was repugnant to his feelings to be thus dependent on the whim and the look of another—he, who was so accustomed to free and imperious authority. He recalled once more the whole course of the visit, and now he thought he had discovered the mystery. It was only an action with his glove that had disclosed it; but it was indubitable; that was it. He had told the prince how delighted he was to be drinking renewed health at the same spring as his royal master, and when the prince had looked at him inquiringly, he had added that he was also going to Karlsbad, and should have the daily happiness while there of seeing his prince. Yes, it was that, for the prince had turned towards him a quick look of astonishment and had pulled on his glove.

It was a decided error, and Sonnenkamp acknowledged to himself that he had not exercised sufficient reserve, for nothing had been officially made known respecting the prince's journey to the baths; it was over-hasty, and it betrayed a kind of espionage, that Sonnenkamp should have spoken of it. Could it have annoyed the prince? Had not Sonnenkamp touched upon the matter in a pleasant, and as it seemed to him, even graceful manner?

He pondered over it still more, and fresh light seemed

thrown upon it. Had not the prince said to Tante Claudine: "It is thoroughly agreeable to me here with you, everything is in its usual uninterrupted state."

The prince seemed offended that secret preparations had been made for his arrival. Was it not then usual to do so with royal personages?

And now Sonnenkamp's vexation turned from himself to the prince.

The prince ought to have remembered that he had lived a long time abroad, and Frau Dournay might have taken better care as she had been a lady at the court; and Prancken also might have advised, as he was a gentleman in waiting.

For a short time he pondered whether to give up the whole plan. What was the good of rank? Why should he wish to enter the court circle? Why impose upon himself lasting fetters? He was proud of being a free nature, and now was he to place himself in uniform and to regulate his step, his actions, and his words according to the custom of the court? He would rather remain as he was, proud in himself, and openly despising society, as he had really despised it in secret.

He felt bitterly that he had really gone too far; retreat was ignominy. And how long he had consoled Frau Ceres with this hope, and what obligations bound him with regard to Prancken, and above all to Roland! What was to become of him, if he was not raised to rank?

Firmly and decidedly he returned to the house and behaved as if he had been much pleased with the visit.

Indeed, when Joseph told him that the royal personages had left him no presents, he dispensed a rich one, adding that Prancken had been entrusted with it; and the servants were to spread it throughout the

whole neighbourhood, that the prince had been there and had behaved most liberally. This would make all the people round jealous, and jealousy would help to spread the report, and the best of the whole thing, to his own mind, was that every one would be deceived.

Sonnenkamp whistled softly to himself, and this was an infallible sign that he was thoroughly cheerful and contented. He devoted his special attention to the aunt, praised her modesty and the keen judgment of the prince in his due appreciation of her. It seemed really to delight him, to see how people rejected praise and yet how secretly tickled they were by it.

He walked smilingly about; he took pleasure in his power to dissipate the universal phantom of honour. This prince was surrounded by honour, homage, and subjection—did he imagine he was really honoured? What did it matter? He thought himself honoured, and that was enough. Who would ask what alloy was in the coin so long as the things of the world were to be purchased by it? All the gloom which the prince's visit had produced, vanished as the mist which covers the landscape on a summer morning; indeed, the mist is a sign of fine weather, it becomes dew and everything glitters and sparkles.

The whole house became the scene of new movement, for the preparations for the journey to the baths were to be made. Eric also had declared himself ready to accompany the party, as he considered himself bound not to leave Roland.

Sonnenkamp had especial delight in the life at the baths; there was freedom there, and easy connexion with society; it was the place to which families of rank repaired, and, without intending it, threw off their formal restraints. He defeated every objection raised

by Dr. Richard, boldly asserting that the prince's physician had advised him to go there. The prince with his suite were to be there, Bella and Clodwig were to be there, and there all matters must be decided both as regarded the elevation to rank and the betrothal of Prancken.

Feelings of the most different kind were agitating the hearts of those who got into the carriages for the journey to the baths.

Who can conjecture beforehand what revolution of feeling they were all to experience?

CHAPTER IV.

THE season at Karlsbad was brilliant; seldom had there been so many distinguished guests and so many adventurers assembled there. To the class of adventurers, but also to that of the distinguished, Sonnenkamp belonged; he had arrived with a great suite, wife and daughter, son, tutor, companion, and several servants, whom however he modestly dressed in simple clothes, and not in livery.

The court, and Bella and Clodwig had been already a week at the baths when the Sonnenkamp family arrived.

On the same day an equally unpresuming but highly respected guest took his departure. Eric met him, as he was drinking his last glass at the Sprudel. It was Weidmann. Among the society at the baths it was talked of for many days, that the prince had twice invited this president of the Chamber of Deputies, the inflexible leader of the opposition, to dine with him, and had repeatedly accosted him on his morning walk. The statistics varied a little; some asserted that they had seen this morning salutation twice, and others, on the contrary, had seen it three times.

Again the meeting between Eric and Weidmann was only a passing one, and Eric felt shy at saying that he would some day pay him a visit.

Bella was very lively, but her animation was rather

outward restlessness. She told Eric that it was delightful that they could now see each other daily for weeks; she expected great amusement, and she was unembarrassed enough to laugh with him, and tell him that when there was a concert for charity, at which she should play, he must sing.

Clodwig soon made his young friend acquainted with an old one. This was a banker of cultivated tastes, residing in a large commercial town, whom he met every year at the baths, and the two old gentlemen always passed many hours of the day together. The banker at seventy years of age had all the restlessness of youth, and was as greedy of information as he was ready to communicate his knowledge. Clodwig maintained his usual repose, and rarely talked while he was walking. If he had anything to say, or any reply to make to his communicative friend, he remained standing.

At the breakfast tables on the old meadow, the prince and Countess Bella were constantly the subjects of conversation. It was said that the band played a waltz composed by her. Countess Bella's dress was talked of, but still more the fact that the prince walked with her almost daily; that he was very merry on these occasions, and was often heard to laugh at Bella's smart rejoinders. Clodwig also could congratulate himself on many exhibitions of royal favour.

Bella formed a special court for herself; she breakfasted with a select party in the open air in the presence of everyone, and her table was always decorated with the choicest flowers.

When Sonnenkamp met the prince walking with Bella—and this happened every morning—Bella nodded to him graciously, and the prince also gave him a sign

of recognition, but in spite of their constant meeting, never accosted him.

A beautiful Spanish girl, dressed in deep mourning, and who walked about alone, wearing a heavy black veil, and speaking to no one, contested with Bella for the prize of attention. It was said of the Spanish girl that she had had the misfortune to discover a few days after her marriage, that her husband was already married to another.

Frau Ceres excited a general feeling of repugnance. Every morning she was dragged in a chair to the spring. On her lap lay a small dog, and in her hand she held a freshly gathered rose.

Manna mingled but little with the morning life; she went early to mass, and practised industriously at her harp, having selected a room in which she could not be heard. At church she often met the veiled Spanish girl, and she longed to approach the solitary mourner, though she forebore to do so; her own heart had indeed its load of bitterness.

Sonnenkamp, thanks to Bella's efforts, could boast of belonging to the élite of the company. He cared but little that the distinguished guests said among themselves, that a bath acquaintance was not bound to become more; he hoped, indeed he confidently believed, that perhaps even here that decisive sentence might be pronounced, which would place him on a level with the rest of the distinguished world; he behaved even now with the ease of an equal among equals.

Bella had no rest in a place of amusement in which she was to sojourn for any length of time, unless there was some one for her to hate and to persecute; then only was her pleasure complete. For want of any one

else, the Spanish girl was her victim. Bella maintained that the paraded solitariness of the Spanish girl was a mask, and that she was nothing but a Parisian dressmaker; to enact the melancholy young widow was a comedy, and that it was effective to wear mourning, and attire herself in a black veil. She challenged the gentlemen of her party to follow the veiled Spanish girl, as she called her, and compel her to unmask. The wine cavalier declared himself ready, but the veiled lady ceased to appear for some days, and she had left. The wine cavalier intimated that this was a concerted plan, and Bella was delighted to find her supposition confirmed. She gave the wine cavalier to understand that it was a glory to him to have had such an unusual adventure, and therefore to keep up appearances, and to confirm Bella's supposition, he must take his departure. She laughed more than she had ever laughed before, when at his last breakfast on the following morning, he gave out that a veiled mystery was connected with his sudden departure. Bella was now doubly merry.

Bella and Sonnenkamp found in their daily intercourse of weeks, many unexpected points of mutual agreement. At the bottom they had one point of common affinity, namely, their contempt of the world. Bella had a profound contempt of the court life in which she moved so agreeably, and Sonnenkamp revealed to her on his part the despicableness of other circles. Both seemed strong to themselves, for they felt that they trod the same path.

Both agreed perfectly in one thing, that the whole community and all society generally was nothing but a silent agreement of lies; no one believed another, no one honoured another, and all that was extolled as

important, was nothing but gloss and humbug, maintained just so long as was necessary. None but a few boors of teachers and idea-hunters believed in the idols of their own manufacture.

Sonnenkamp declared that she was the first woman in whom he had discovered real courage of mind, and in spite of the agreement of both that all fine and good words were nothing but falsehood and compromise, both felt that there was truth in this expression. Bella knew that she had courage, and allowed Sonnenkamp the right of legislating this courage.

He repeatedly gave her to understand that he alone comprehended her grand nature, in fact he once said plainly: "Any one who had a wife like you, and were himself a man—a conquering nature with a wife like you—could create a new throne in the world. I had renounced the hope of ever becoming acquainted with a nature born for rule like yours."

He said this partly as a polite speech, but she knew that he was in earnest, and she took it as earnest. She was indignant at the petty world, where some take pleasure in intrigues, and others in what they call humanity, but which is really nothing but sentimentality.

There was always something significant, something implying a secret understanding, in their mutual salutation, even when they only quickly passed each other. Their very glance seemed to say: we alone are strong and great enough to despise such trifling.

It was a beautiful July morning, and Bella had a large *déjeuner;* she had invited the Sonnenkamp family, and Manna appeared on this occasion with her mother. The privy counsellor, the adjutant-general,

and many ladies and gentlemen of the highest rank of all countries, were likewise present.

The rich and tasteful arrangement of flowers on the table was admired by every one. Bella introduced Sonnenkamp as the giver of them, and with great adroitness she showed the guests that Herr Sonnenkamp, so well known as a great horticulturist, understood also how to arrange his flowers. Sonnenkamp was well satisfied with the impression produced.

Manna remarked timidly that the waste of the flowers here vexed her; by being pressed together in such numbers the true character of the flowers, especially of the roses, was destroyed; their tender nature was to a certain extent offended.

Eric replied that without these flowers, life here would be robbed of one source of splendour and brightness; that the purest and most beautiful things were not safe from abuse and exaggeration, but that this must not make us lose the beauty of their character.

The conversation ran on in jest, and mirth, and with that agreeable excitement which the waters and the early morning produce, and, besides, a tall lieutenant from a small German principality afforded a butt for pleasantry. The tall lieutenant had openly confessed that he had come to the baths to make some rich citizen's daughter the sharer of his rank; he had confided the fact to Bella, and she now endeavoured to bring him into various ridiculous alliances.

The tall lieutenant submitted to it; he had one standing witticism; he regretted "on his honour" that Roland was not a daughter of Sonnenkamp's, as he would have married her.

Manna blushed, for this openly implied that she was regarded as Prancken's *fiancée*.

Clodwig, Sonnenkamp, Eric, Roland, and the banker, undertook a long walk through the wood. Bella kept Manna with herself. As Prancken was not on that day in attendance on the court, he also remained with them.

Bella discussed with Manna her dress at the next réunion, for she had brought matters so far that Sonnenkamp and his family were invited to a reception only consisting of the highest nobles of Europe. Manna had begged to be allowed to remain away, but this was refused as perfectly impossible; so she complied, scarcely knowing that she had done so. Bella, who boasted great knowledge of human nature, had often confessed to her brother that she could make nothing of Manna. She had, however, endeavoured to insinuate herself into her confidence, but Manna generally only listened to her with a smile, as if she were speaking to a totally different being, and even now she looked as if her thoughts were scarcely present. She was speaking to Bella and Prancken, but her thoughts had wandered away, perhaps, to those who were now strolling through the wood.

Eric had at first joined Clodwig, and the latter smiled as the young man told him that he had never experienced life at the baths before, and that it almost confused him.

At a turn in the road, Eric retired and let Sonnenkamp go on with Clodwig. Clodwig felt his intercourse with Sonnenkamp at once repulsive and attractive. He had never before been acquainted with a man of the kind; but he recognized in him a certain

kind of courage, as the man never clothed himself in a false mantle.

Again Sonnenkamp endeavoured to induce the count actively to advocate his elevation to rank, but Sonnenkamp received a treatment such as he had never done before, for Clodwig crushed him with nothing but words of politeness.

"I am astonished at your courage and persistency," said he, and yet he really meant: I reprobate your impudence and importunity.

"You are indefatigable," were his words, and yet they implied: you are a shameless oppressor.

Sonnenkamp had had various experiences, but never till now had he been struck down with words of politeness. He smiled, he must not show his annoyance, and Clodwig was all the while so quiet, so commanding, he tapped at his gold snuff-box as if he would say to the titillating powers within it: Be patient, the man shall have a strong pinch presently. At length he opened the box and handed Sonnenkamp a pinch, which was received with courteous thanks.

As they were returning home from their morning walk a great pleasure awaited Eric; his tutor, Professor Einsiedel, had arrived.

The good, deep-thinking professor was quite helpless, he seemed to himself lost and banished at having been sent here by his colleague, the first physician of the university. Eric arranged everything for him, and was happy to be able to find him quarters in the same house as that in which he was himself living, with the Sonnenkamp family.

While Eric was with his tutor, he saw Sonnenkamp in the distance talking with Professor Crutius, who had also just arrived.

Crutius seemed inclined to shirk Sonnenkamp's intimacy, though it was difficult for him to find the way for doing so. When Sonnenkamp now held out his hand in farewell, Crutius did not take it, but seized his hat and raised it politely.

Beautifully dressed, with flowers in her hair, Manna went up and down the large saloon; she was ashamed of herself as she saw her bare neck in the large mirror, and she drew the cloud of tulle closer round her; presently Roland and Eric entered. Eric stood and stared.

"You come so late!" said Manna.

Eric explained that he had been introducing his tutor into the arrangements of the place, and that he hoped Manna also would find pleasure in intercourse with a man of such a refined and reflective mind.

"Your tutor?" said Manna, and her voice had again its veiled tone. "Make me acquainted with him to-morrow. But now make haste that you may be in good time for the reception."

"I am not invited," replied Eric.

"No, he is not invited, and so I am not going either," exclaimed Roland.

The father and mother came, but no persuasion availed; Roland remained behind, he would not even comply with Eric's urgent request. The family drove off. Roland then seemed sorry not to have gone also; and he begged Eric to accompany him to the gallery, from whence he could see the company dancing.

Prancken was master of the ceremonies, and Manna shared precedence with him; her cheeks glowed, and Roland was vexed that she did not once look up to the gallery.

But Manna seemed to herself to have no part in it at

all, and in the midst of the merriment, she said to Prancken: "Have you heard that Captain Dournay's tutor is arrived?"

Prancken's brows contracted. So, she was thinking of him, now, in the midst of the merriment. He paused for a moment, he scarcely knew what answer to make. At length he said in a cheerful tone: "Ah! tutor! All this pack of tutors, are they not tedious to you also? Come, here is music, dancing, and joy."

He lightly glided with her into the circle, and Manna felt as if she were floating in the air and no longer touching the ground.

"Let us go," said Roland to Eric. They went and wandered in the moonlight along the beautiful paths of the wood, through which they had passed in the morning.

"Is there no means," asked Roland, "of telling a secret confided to me, and which I keep with such difficulty? I should like to talk to you about it. May I not tell you?"

"No, you must not under any condition break your word. If you do that, you loosen all hold over yourself."

Roland sighed: he would so gladly have told Eric that his family was to be ennobled.

When they passed out into the light again and looked over the town and valley over which the moon was shining, and sounds like the faint tones of music reached them from the dancing-room, Roland said again: "I think Manna will be engaged to Prancken to-night. Our mother thinks that this would help forward the other thing. You can guess it now, can't you?"

Eric replied that it was not right of Roland to talk of family affairs which had been confided to him alone.

He said this with a trembling voice. A fact that had long ago been decided, seemed to him suddenly new, and unheard of, and impossible. With a feeling of delight and yet of dread, he realized that Manna had become more to him than she ought to be. He bored his stick deep into the ground, and used such effort that it broke in his hand; then turning to Roland he said that they would go home.

Just as they were entering the house, the carriage drove up; Sonnenkamp alighted, and behind him Frau Ceres and Manna.

"Are you engaged to Prancken?" inquired Roland.

"You are a silly child," returned Manna, and ran quickly up the steps.

Sonnenkamp begged Eric to come to him in his room, and Roland was to go to rest.

"Here is a lighter kind of cigar, try one of these," said Sonnenkamp to Eric, as he leant back in his chair. "Captain, I consider you as one belonging to the family; you are ours, and must ever remain so."

Eric trembled. Did the father guess at anything? Was he now, prompted by Roland's awkward question, going to tell him that he must give up all thought of Manna? Sonnenkamp made a longer pause; he had evidently expected that Eric would offer some reply to his confidential address. But as the latter was still silent, Sonnenkamp rose and walked up and down the room. Then he stood still in front of Eric, and said: "I am going to-day to give you the surest token that I consider you as belonging to us. Give me your hand."

Eric did so.

Sonnenkamp continued: "I acknowledge and I honour your reserve."

Eric looked restlessly about him.

What did it mean?

When Sonnenkamp had taken a few more rapid puffs from his cigar, he continued: "You have never by one word allowed any one to perceive what was going on, and what you have of course remarked."

Eric still trembled. Sonnenkamp made such unusual pauses.

At length, almost as if unwillingly, he uttered the words: "You know that I am to be raised to rank."

"No, I did not know it."

"Not? Indeed? Has Roland never given you an idea of it?"

"The idea of some secret certainly, but I have strictly forbidden him even to breathe in the least a secret entrusted to him."

"You are right. I am thankful to you—I shall be still more so. Well, let me be plain! Captain...you can essentially contribute to the furtherance...and acceleration of the matter."

"I?"

"Yes, you. You are the friend of our noble Count Wolfsgarten; he already belongs to our family, but he always refuses when I or my friends claim his assistance in this affair. You know me, dear Captain Dournay, you have observed my life, you have a keen eye, I may expect that you will think of me justly and as a friend to mankind, in spite of all the faults which I unfortunately possess. You are a man who acts in accordance with his opinions. Do you understand me?"

"To confess openly, I do not understand you fully."

"Well, then, in the next few days—I am going to give a country fête in the Hans-Heiligthal—I shall bear the Jew company; you will go with your friend

Wolfsgarten, and will easily learn what vote he is going to give for me, or perhaps has already given."

"Would not Herr von Prancken, or the countess, or the privy counsellor, be better fitted for the task?"

"No; otherwise I would not trouble you. Count Wolfsgarten has declined all information, for, in his somewhat pedantic—I mean in his refined and strict manner, he always says, a confidential opinion, intended only for the prince's eye, must be known to no one else. The prince is starting in the next few days, and he is in a good mood. So, dear Dournay, you will find it out for me, won't you? It will be so easy for you!"

"Herr Sonnenkamp," replied Eric, "you had a little while ago the kindness to acknowledge my conduct as correct, when I prevented Roland from confiding a secret to me. How am I now—"

"Oh, dear Dournay," interposed Sonnenkamp, "one denies a young man a great many things which one may allow to oneself. I honour, I respect your truth, I acknowledge the sacrifice you would make for me—perfectly, thoroughly—but will you not make this sacrifice for me?"

Eric endeavoured to refuse the task, but Sonnenkamp threw his head back when Eric persisted that he was not fitted for such investigations, and that he considered it treachery to friendship to repeat confidential communications.

"I do not think, moreover," he added in conclusion, "that Count Wolfsgarten will tell me anything."

Sonnenkamp was furious in his heart, but he praised Eric's conscientiousness, and spoke enthusiastically of his great tact, and his moral purity, and his grand ideas—indeed, he begged him to forgive him for having once for a short time imagined that Eric was something

more than a friend of Bella's. He excused this brief injustice by his own sad experiences, and spoke of it as the highest happiness to have become acquainted for once with such a really pure and noble man.

"My dear young friend," he said, in a trembling voice, and smothered with his tears. "Yes, my friend, I call you so, for you are so, if I have not myself the right to be as near to you as I should like, yet remember you would be doing a great thing, indeed a necessary thing—not for me, what do I matter? You would be doing it for our Roland,—for our Roland!" he repeated with emphasis.

The mention of this name seemed suddenly to arouse Eric; he replied at first only with an inquiry why Herr Sonnenkamp was so desirous of rank for Roland.

"Oh, my friend!" continued Sonnenkamp, growing more tender, "that is the last, the one aim of my endeavours in the old world. Who knows how soon I may die; you will remain the friend, the support of my son...give me your hand...you will remain so. I die in calm confidence, knowing him in your protection. Ah, no one sees in my general appearance how ill I am. I hold myself upright, but inwardly I am broken down. The labours and struggles of my life have left their traces on me, though no one sees it. It may suddenly end, and I should like to have left my son in fixed security. My friend! you love our beautiful, our glorious German fatherland. You will win for this fatherland a true and powerful son. If Roland remains as he is, if he retains the name he has, he will always regard himself a citizen of the other world, and will never be a genuine son of our German fatherland, in which alone a man of noble mind and rich possessions can fulfil a mission of humanity. Pardon me if I

do not express myself as warmly as I feel, and as I ought to do. I only tell you, you have done so much for Roland, make him now also a son of Germany, if not for his own sake, yet for that of his country."

Sonnenkamp well knew what a deep chord he was touching in Eric's heart, and how he felt the painful earnest tone of a father, and appreciated an expression, so full, so penetrating, and so devout, as though he were looking not only beyond his own death, but beyond everything connected with himself. Eric was touched, and said: "I would give my life for Roland—"

Sonnenkamp was on the point of embracing him, but Eric begged him to let him finish.

"I could give my life, but not my principles; still I am ready at any minute to allow myself to be converted by reasonable grounds. Do you then think it would be a happiness for Roland if he were ennobled?"

"The only one, there is no other. You do not, I hope, mistake me, my dear noble friend. I acknowledge to you openly, I prize money highly, I have won it laboriously, and wish to preserve it. I should like to make perishable property imperishable, at least in a great measure. My son is to enjoy freely that which I have won with iron industry. Oh, my friend, you do not know the severe blow my life has had, because I... yet leave me, it will agitate me to-day too much. One thing more though occurs to me; it is well that I have remembered it. You were the cause of bringing my thoughts into this channel."

"I? Wherefore I?"

"Remember. On the first day of your coming to us, you told me, and you have often confirmed it, that Roland had no special gifts which bound him to any special vocation. It vexed me then, but it is per-

fectly true. Just because Roland is not endowed with genius, he must be ennobled, for that gives position and support to natures that are mediocre, and cannot conquer for themselves. A man is a baron or a count, and as such he is something already, and has not to become something; and if a man is something besides, one is thankful, and thinks it especially delightful. Ah, dear friend, I speak confusedly."

"Not at all."

"Let me only say, Roland will one day—ah, perhaps soon—enter into the possession of millions. If he is a noble, he not only belongs to their select circle, but he has all the duties and high responsibilities of honour, benevolence, and general usefulness, and he has them doubly, because he is a noble of new creation. Oh, my friend, I have opened to you my whole heart. I know almost the whole inhabited world, and shall I tell you what I have found?"

"I shall hear it thankfully."

"Well then, my friend; there are three communities of men forming a united body in themselves, so that no one stands alone. A man must be one of these three in this warring world—"

Sonnenkamp paused, and as Eric looked at him enquiringly, he continued: "Yes, my friend, in the world one must be either a Jew or a Jesuit, or a noble. You smile? You are surprised? Let me explain myself. Look over the whole world, and you will find that these three alone form a union, an inviolable and constant union, and afford the idea of an actual community. My son *cannot* become a Jew, he *shall* not become a Jesuit, he *must* become a noble."

Eric felt himself startled by Sonnenkamp's communications; they were in opposition to his liberal

mind, but he saw that the idea was not to be eradicated from Sonnenkamp's thoughts, and looking back, it became evident to him that everything had long aimed at it. And might it not perhaps be good for Roland to be ennobled? Might not this alone be able to give him a true home in Germany?

Until far in the night, Sonnenkamp was representing how necessary this elevation of rank was to Roland, and tired out, Eric at length gave the promise that he would try to use his influence on Clodwig. He lay restless in his bed, he seemed to himself as a recreant.

CHAPTER V.

"BALL," "American," "Fiancé," were words that might be heard in every language at the spring on the following morning, while Manna, shrinking within herself, was lying before the altar of the town church, long after mass was over. She was crying for help, for succour against the world; she wished, bearing in mind the words of the priest, that wherever she went she could open her heart to a brother or a father, that she could confess even here, but she forebore to do so, for she could not reveal everything. For the first time in her life she left the church with a mind burdened heavily.

Eric was walking on the hills, struggling with himself. Sonnenkamp had spoken so openly with him, and yet he had not mentioned the one point, that Prancken was waiting for the engagement until Manna was ennobled.

He started when he suddenly heard his name called, and yet the voice was a very soft one. It was Professor Einsiedel who met him. He complained that he did not see at all how he could go for weeks without work, thinking only of the care to be bestowed on his body. He repeated with a child-like smile that a course of baths was like an illness, with the permission to walk about. He must submit to it, for he should have had to endure an illness, had he been in bed.

Presently he asked Eric as to the course of his studies.

"Life with others is good," he said, "but life with oneself is better, and I am afraid you have not lived enough with yourself."

Eric felt like a schoolboy who had been caught in idleness, and receives admonishment; he was obliged to confess that he had lost sight of work. The professor's face wrinkled up as though it were nothing but folds; he was silent for some time, then he said: "You are inflicting the greatest injury on yourself and your pupil."

"On me and my pupil?"

"Yes. You have no scientific work side by side with your daily vocation, and so it is scarcely possible to find the energy and freshness necessary for teaching. I have also been a tutor, but I have always preserved my own sanctuary of science. It belongs to right education that a man should not always place himself at the disposal of his pupil; the pupil must know and acknowledge that beside him there is a being who is carrying on his own inner life, and that no one may have his powers always at the disposal of another. You must never consider yourself as finished—observe, I say finished—you must constantly go on improving. To be finished is the beginning of death. Look at the leaf on the tree! As soon as it has reached its utmost greenness, it turns yellow and begins to fade."

The words uttered by the professor in the quiet wood, had often been in Eric's heart, though he had never liked to confess them to himself.

"'Non semper arcum tendit Apollo,' says Horace," replied he in the words of his master's favourite poet.

"Apollo certainly does not always keep his bow

stretched, but he never lays it down, it is his inalienable attribute," replied Einsiedel.

Eric returned to the town as a newly awakened being; he saw the danger in which he stood from appreciation in society, and from the introduction of thoughts and facts gained in earnest study, for the sake of diversion rather than of progress. The professor had understood his innermost nature very differently to the doctor, in their conversation long ago.

Professor Einsiedel took especial delight in Roland, and the latter displayed a reverence and devotion towards the old scholar which refreshed Eric's heart when he saw them together. Many a word spoken by the professor penetrated deeply into the youth's mind, and one day Roland said:

"One would scarcely imagine that the tall lieutenant and the professor belong to the same human race."

Eric gladly allowed his pupil to walk alone with the professor, and his eye beamed when Einsiedel said to him again, after a few days:

"You have done a good work; the youth has a good deal of idealistic pride, or rather we may call it intellectual superiority. I think he can never fall into crime and baseness, because his pride renders everything low repulsive to him. A self-consciousness inclining to pride, if rightly guided, may become a safe moral principle."

Bella had at first endeavoured to make the professor the object of her raillery; but he looked at her with such a childlike expression, and was at the same time so silently reproving, that she adopted another tone, and completely overlooked him.

A fresh source of interest appeared, when Professor Einsiedel became intimate with Manna.

It had become apparent to him, in his intercourse with Eric, that he had been sent here by that Invisible Power who unites the lives of men; he did not feel this with Manna, and yet it was still more the case here, for Manna was seeking and needing help, and she attached herself to the refined and child-like old man like a careful daughter.

Science has not yet fully fathomed how the waters of healing are formed, and no one can divine how one man influences another, and becomes an invisible agent for his good or for his change of sentiments.

Thus Professor Einsiedel influenced Manna in an unexpected manner.

When she informed him that she was going into the convent, he said:

"I could almost envy you. If I were a Catholic, I would go into a convent, but I should like one formed of nothing but men of science, who have no time nor fitness for the requirements of life, and yet feel that they have great works to accomplish."

Manna was timid, but as if remembering her old courage, she ventured, though only in the form of a question, to show the professor the necessity and sole assurance of faith.

She was quite astonished when the usually quiet old man suddenly roused himself.

"We are not fighting against the church," he said. "The church cannot fashion the world, nor form a state nor a society; it can establish hospitals and orphanages, and that is all. Life is not in it, but in classical culture, in advancing civilization. And now, observe what I say: the world has inherited two great ideas from classic antiquity, and these ideas are state and ·ionality. In these two ideas men progressed. Then

came religion, and planted the unity of mankind in men's minds; men were to be brethren, and mankind was to be one. This religion alone could do, the Roman age could not effect it, nor that of the old or new Cæsars. Religion has fulfilled its vocation, it has given the world the idea of humanity. Nations now gather together in separate states and form nationalities; but the idea of the unity of man is never lost. But excuse me, I am falling into a dogmatical tone. I am sorry if I have hurt any feeling that is high and sacred to you; it will, I hope, remain so to you, although I may repel it. But I beg you—I beg you truly not again to bring the subject before me."

Manna walked beside the professor and wished some divine power would come to carry her away from him. Into what had she fallen?

What had she been obliged to listen to? And this from a man who was not a worldling, and who desired nothing but calmly and industriously to finish his life.

No divine power came to carry her away, and she endeavoured to soothe her feelings.

It was well, she thought, that she had heard all this from a man whom she could not condemn. It was the last trial of the tempter, and he should not lead her astray. She protested solemnly to herself, and pressed her hand on her heart as though she wanted to cling to something. But her prop had vanished, and was no longer to be grasped. That for which she had wished to sacrifice her life could scarcely be a recognised plea, for in the church in which she had wished to sacrifice it, nothing had been done to eradicate the monstrous evil.

She longed at once to withdraw herself from the professor, but she thought herself unjust to do so.

What had he done, but freely and openly acknowledged his opinions?

She devoted herself to him from a feeling of attachment; she saw that the truth, as he comprehended it, was beyond everything to him, and that he regarded all error as an evil.

Professor Einsiedel frequently walked with an old and wrinkled man of extremely humble appearance; whenever he met Manna and she accosted him, his companion drew back, as if he had no right to intrude into society.

Professor Einsiedel told Manna one day his history.

They had been at school together, but his companion had left early because his parents had died, and he had to take care of his brothers and sisters. He was a book-keeper in a large banking-house, and supported his widowed sister and her children. With great self-privation he spared a considerable sum, and one day, when he had been to the theatre, he found on his return that his nephew had broken open his writing-table and had stolen all his possessions. He learned that he had fled to America. Without ever betraying a word of it, he began to spare and to save anew, and sacrificed his life for another.

The professor could not have imagined how this simple story affected Manna.

Sonnenkamp meanwhile saw with vexation his sojourn at the baths passing away, without any decision being arrived at with regard to the affair nearest to his heart. The general, who had been his guest at Villa Eden, had arrived to travel with the prince to the sea, when his present baths were over. The general was chancellor of the order. Sonnenkamp inquired after the state of his own affairs. The general

was very reserved, and could only be brought to express that the decision did not lie with him but with Count Wolfsgarten.

Sonnenkamp had hitherto always had a fear of talking with Bella on the subject of his elevation to rank, he had a feeling that it placed him in a false position with her; he now overcame it and spoke to her of Clodwig's necessary co-operation. She laughed at him at first heartily that he should wish anything of the kind, that he should be striving after a patent of nobility, which would soon be purchaseable for a few thousand guldens; with the present court it was certainly a little more difficult, but when once a person was ennobled, who would inquire when it had taken place. Moreover, she did not think it suitable to Sonnenkamp to give up his exceptional position and rank himself with others in society, even though that society might be one of nobles.

Sonnenkamp did not succeed in solving the problem, whether in truth Bella did not consider it worthy of him to allow himself to be ennobled, or whether a certain ancestral pride in her made her wish to decline it in a polite manner. In spite of the traps he laid, he could not discover what Bella thought and wished; she saw the snare and always dexterously avoided it. She trifled with him, and sometimes she let him believe that she thought him too high to be placed on a level with anyone, and sometimes she made him understand that he ought not to enter a circle in which he could never be at home. When Sonnenkamp was angry at this varying frame, she contrived to fascinate him with a look or a word.

The prince, the general, Clodwig, and Bella, were to take their departure in the next few days; if Sonnen-

kamp could not now obtain the prince's company, he determined still to ally himself with the whole aristocratic world, and he prepared a fête in the so-called Hans-Heilingthal.

The day of the fête at length arrived. Roland rode on first with Prancken. Sonnenkamp drove with the banker, and Eric with Clodwig. The day was sunny but not too hot. A gay party left their carriages on the top of the hill and walked through the wood down towards the valley.

Eric tried to speak of Sonnenkamp's elevation to rank, but Clodwig at once interposed and prohibited him with a kind of fatherly severity from referring to the subject. For the first time there was something in Clodwig's look that Eric did not understand. They proceeded on their way in silence.

When they reached the valley, Sonnenkamp took Eric aside and asked him hastily respecting the tone of Clodwig's vote. Eric replied that Clodwig had refused to discuss the matter.

"Thank you—thank you much," said Sonnenkamp, without any apparent reason.

Joseph had spread the table on the edge of the forest stream in Hans-Heilingthal, and Sonnenkamp had only a few additions to make. The party was select, and they were surprised at the arrangements. The tall lieutenant especially was very loquacious, and Sonnenkamp regarded him with surprise, for although no Austrian, he styled him always Herr von Sonnenkamp. A band of music had been placed in the wood, and it was playing some pretty merry airs. Before them stood a group of rocks, which according to the legend was a wedding party petrified by some subterranean power.

Bella turned to Eric and asked how the legend had arisen. Every one listened with attention, as he explained that it was a variation of the legend of Tannhäuser, and that at the dawn of knowledge a series of legends had arisen, based on the dim solution of the riddle respecting the origin of our earth.

Suddenly a forest-horn sounded; and a surprising scene appeared among the rocks above and in the valley below. A band of gypsies, fantastically dressed, suddenly showed themselves, playing their wild melodies, and a young fiddler with blue-black hair danced and bounded with his instrument into their very circle Every one was full of praise of Sonnenkamp, who always contrived to prepare something unusual, and they scarcely knew whether it was modesty or truth when he declared that he was himself surprised. A look that passed between him and Lutz, showed that he spoke the truth.

Bella encouraged the gypsies to play still wilder melodies, and when she learned that the people had encamped in the neighbourhood, she went there with some gentlemen and ladies; she induced Roland also to accompany her. She regretted that Professor Einsiedel was not there, as he had told her that the language of the gypsies was allied with Sanscrit. Bella then asked all round, if any of the party could draw. The thin horse, eating its bundle of hay, the waggon, the old women sitting round the open fire, were at once attempted by the tall lieutenant as a subject for a sketch. A wild-looking dark girl, wearing a large crinoline and smoking a short pipe, quickly became a favourite of Bella's. She was quite delighted with the saucy girl. She gave her a gay shawl, which she immediately twisted round her head like a turban.

Manna looked thoughtful; she saw the way in which Bella treated human beings.

Manna went with the party, but she was living as if in a dream. In her heart she was looking upon all this already in remembrance, just as she might recall it to her mind on her separation from the world. Even now, it seemed to her in the distance, as a thing past; she stood in the midst of life as if she were absent from it, for she adhered firmly to the idea that she would forsake it all. This year was a year of trial, and she delighted in the thought that months in this year were already past.

Under the shady fir-trees at the edge of the hill, large carpets had been spread, and on these the ladies seated themselves while the gentlemen still remained at table, and encouraged by the tall lieutenant the wine went round.

"Why are you not a noble?" inquired the tall lieutenant of Herr Sonnenkamp.

"Because Herr Sonnenkamp is a citizen," interposed Clodwig.

"But nobles can be made out of citizens when a man has millions."

Prancken made an angry sign at his comrade so that he suddenly paused, but the privy counsellor considered it in place to add, as they were expecting Clodwig's opinion—

"Yes, lieutenant, if noble-mindedness, great power, benevolence and worthiness could make a man a noble, then—then our Herr Sonnenkamp would be one."

The tall lieutenant fancied he had a good witticism ready, and this no one can long repress even when he has not drank champagne, so he exclaimed: "Very good—delicious! Count von Wolfsgarten, you are

the cleverest of us all; are you also of opinion that a millionaire should be ennobled? Not the million, but the posessor of millions?"

"It is more than amiable of you," replied Clodwig, "to apply to me your sovereign power of naming the cleverest."

"Thank you, the stroke hits," exclaimed the tall lieutenant. "But pray now, give me your opinion."

"I think," said a fat retired knight-marshal who boasted of having already decreased sixteen pounds in weight while at the baths, "I think, our noble host has the right to require that this discussion should not be carried on here. Is it not so, Your Excellency?" he said, turning to Clodwig.

But before the latter could answer, Sonnenkamp interposed: "On the contrary, it would delight me if my honoured guests would do me the honour of looking upon me as one belonging to them, and would carry on the discussion; indeed, I should like to regard this even as an evidence that they do not look upon me as a stranger."

Clodwig, who had broken through his strict rule, and at much persuasion had drank two glasses of champagne, suddenly assumed a roguish manner, and exclaimed: "Well, then, Herr Sonnenkamp, tell us first your own opinion."

"Yes, yes," cried the tall lieutenant, "a man who has gained millions and can arrange such a fairy-like fête as this, must—"

"Pray," interrupted Clodwig, "let Herr Sonnenkamp speak."

"My honoured friend," he began; "I have visited all quarters of our inhabited globe, and I have everywhere found that there is and must be an aristocracy."

"It is the same among our horses and dogs," interposed the tall lieutenant. "Countess Dingsda, from Russia, has two mouse-coloured greyhounds, which are descended from the Empress Catharine—I mean from the dogs of the Empress Catharine."

The knight-marshal, with his decrease of sixteen pounds, whispered to the tall lieutenant to restrain himself, for he was exposing himself and the whole company. The tall lieutenant passed his hand across his brow and promised softly to obey.

"Go on," said Clodwig, and Sonnenkamp continued: "It is, moreover, a happiness for the wild races when they possess families which have for ages in succession formed in themselves a rallying point for the rest and also new families which distinguish themselves by courage and wisdom, forming, if one may say so, a new dynasty."

The perspiration stood on Sonnenkamp's forehead. Clodwig saw it, and began to speak: "We might say that, perhaps, it was the special vocation of the noble to combine cultivation and courage; one ought never to be without the other. Nobleness of rank—I hope you understand me rightly—belonged according to tradition to one who, in former times, possessed by birth distinguishing power, and thus obtained it, and it became an ancestral right, and still more an ancestral duty. The noble was a man who combined both natural and historical prerogatives; and generation after generation thus maintained a continuation of highly-gifted men. The noble had an hereditary office. He was to act according to his nature, but at the same time he was bound by certain hereditary conditions."

"The wine will freeze inside me before I understand a word of all that," said the tall lieutenant to the

knight-marshal, who was exerting himself to ward off the sleep so prohibited by the rules of the baths. He suddenly roused himself, and said: "Yes, yes, you are right, but pray be quiet."

"You yourself," interposed the general, "also, of course, value ancestral pride, that based on the valour and virtue of your ancestors. Any one who has gone through a gallery in which the pictures of his forefathers look down upon him and contemplate him, feels their influence upon him throughout his life; the eyes of his ancestors seem accompanying him throughout his whole career."

"Very true! very true!" exclaimed many voices.

"And what do you mean by this?" asked Clodwig. "Let us return to our first point."

"Yes, that was what I wished to do. Why is this historical condition not to be ever renewing?"

"Quite right, that is the just mode of stating the question," replied Clodwig. "Is our age one which can find out a special duty and therefore a special privilege for nobles? We live in an age of equality of rights, we have no longer a division of classes. There are only two classes of men—men of honour and men without honour. The nobleman who urges for hereditary honour, has died out in an age of equality of rights. Of what use are coats of arms? To be embroidered on fire screens, sofa pillows, and carpet bags. The general duty of all is the abolition of a distinction of rank. Science, art, trade, these are the factors of our age, and the whole nation without distinction is equally entitled and pledged to take an interest in them. In the present day, rank is only a name, a decoration, nothing more. They even go so far as to ennoble Jews."

"You would not," interposed the banker, "abolish the equal right of all religions, when this equality of right presents itself at the emblazoned gate of rank?'

"Equality of right!" exclaimed Clodwig. "Dear friend of the old race, is it not foolish perversity to use the equality of rights for the abolition of equality of rights? If a man can be raised to rank, not having belonged to it hereditarily, then a Jew can also be ennobled; but he ought not to desire it, he ought to see the treachery and apostasy of such a step. So far as I know, the Jews—I do not trouble myself about their religion—are a perpetual and living warning that we should judge a man not according to what he believes, but according to what he shows himself in virtue and in culture. The Jews are in one respect a nation of nobles—for who has an older and purer pedigree?—and they are also to a certain extent proud that their ancestors were once slaves. I owe one grand idea to an old Rabbi, whom I met once at some baths. He declared to me that there was a great incitement to noble efforts in the idea of a Past, which had been slavery. Much that appears wonderful in the Jews is explained by this one fact. They were slaves in Egypt; that planted in them grand qualities, a pride and an humility, an endurance of oppression, a perception of all partial justice, and of others' suffering, and hence a power of sympathy unequalled in history."

Clodwig paused, then he continued: "But a Jew with coats of arms, with helm and shield, and the whole nonsense—the very sight must vex him; for at the time that men wore helmets and shields, his ancestors were the cash-keepers of the emperors, and were almost free as air. A Jew who passed over to Chris-

tianity, may do so from conviction, because, apart from any dogma, he recognizes the progress in civilization which our Saviour introduced. Many may do it from levity, because it is too burdensome to them, and they do not conceive themselves bound to submit to a continued martyrdom, either for themselves or their children. All this may be tolerated, though there is much to be said against a change of religion. But a Jew who is ennobled is an anachronism more absurd than we can imagine. It is the right and the duty of a Jew to enter a civil community and share its life and progress. Or imagine a series of Jewish noble families who only marry among themselves! The more one thinks of it, the more preposterous is the confusion. But I did not mean to speak of the Jews, and I beg you to excuse me for having gone so far from my subject."

"Shall we not close this discussion?" said Prancken.

"I shall have finished directly. Allow me to say one word more, that I may not break off abruptly. Let me briefly say that I consider the elevation of a citizen to rank—I will not express myself more severely—is an historical contradiction. A man who leaves the citizen class is a deserter, a renegade, I do not like to say a traitor and a madman, but he leaves the victorious standard of citizenship. I know what citizens desire; they desire to chain their possessions to their families, to establish entail, to make squires of the sons of millionaires; but the result will be a stunted race, like the suckers and root-leaves, which never grow into a tree."

Clodwig had had various aims before him in his speech; he wanted to bring the matter home to the mind of his companions in rank, and he wished to

address Sonnenkamp and the banker, for he knew that the banker also had been urged to aspire after rank, and he wished to change his mind once for all. Now, when he saw his old friend's varying countenance, he turned to him and said: "I see you wish to add something."

"Something very important," replied the banker, shrugging his shoulders, and holding out his open gold snuff-box to Clodwig and Sonnenkamp. "Our host is himself an example of the fact that it is the highest honour in the new world to be a self-made man, to have inherited nothing, and to have gained everything. A self-made man is, if one may say so, his motto."

They rose. The gentlemen of the highest families in Germany stared at each other, and had the magic charm been still possible, they would have turned to stone, like the wedding train before them. The tall lieutenant and the knight marshal, who had placed himself for repose, would have formed rather grotesque figures. How was it possible that a man of rank, one of themselves, a Count Wolfsgarten, could speak thus?

They joined the ladies. Clodwig and Eric remained somewhat behind; during the whole discussion Eric had not spoken a word. Clodwig now remarked that he was vexed that he had been so childishly foolish as to reveal his opinions to people who really did not care for anything serious.

"And I thank you," replied Eric.

"Yes," said Clodwig, "and I will allow myself to fancy that I have been speaking to you alone."

He went with him to the wood, where the ladies had quitted their carpeted seat, and sitting down with Eric, he looked on as the youthful party danced on the greensward below.

Sonnenkamp stood leaning against a tall fir-tree; he stood there as if petrified, and almost wished that the whole party could be petrified also.

Clodwig meanwhile said to Eric: "You asked me this morning respecting my vote, I think you will now be able to infer its tone. I have briefly declared that I am absolutely opposed to all elevation to rank; but to you, young friend, I may say that Herr Sonnenkamp has every prospect, as my vote is not decisive."

Eric would have had pleasure in going to Sonnenkamp and communicating to him his information; he had watched the shattering of his hopes, and he longed to raise them again; he felt thoroughly sorry for the man, who desired everything for his son's sake. But he restrained himself, for he did not like by a single word to have any part in the matter. He told Clodwig how Roland had wanted on the evening of the ball to tell him the secret of the elevation to rank, but that it was his intention not to speak of it with the youth, although the father had now made the disclosure to him himself. Roland had until now quietly kept the matter to himself, and it seemed better to overlook it, so that no opposition to his father's measure might be formed in the mind of his son.

The tall lieutenant seemed to wish to divert Sonnenkamp from his solitary reverie; he said to him very familiarly: "Herr von Sonnenkamp, have negroes also musical talent?"

"Negroes take a good deal for music which is only noise," replied Sonnenkamp, "and many wise people take that for conversation which—"

He was looking for a word, and seemed to find none which was severe, and yet at the same time polite

enough; at last he said: " . . . which perhaps in the little capital is thought to be conversation."

He joined the merry party, and then walked homewards, listening to the music, until they reached the carriages.

On their way through the wood, it happened that Manna went with Eric; neither knew how it had occurred. They walked for some distance side by side in silence.

"I hear," Manna at length began, "that Count Clodwig has been speaking very severely against the nobles. Does he also think that privileges of birth are opposed to religion?"

"No, he did not say that."

Again they went on without speaking.

"If only our friend Professor Einsiedel had been with us to-day," resumed Manna. "I am now also his pupil."

"And it is a happiness," replied Eric, "to know his liberal and pious mind."

They did not speak again, but they each felt that the reverence which they mutually entertained for one man, was a kind of link between them.

"Eric! Manna!" cried a voice suddenly, and the sound echoed through the wood. They stood still at thus hearing their names proclaimed together, and echoed again and again from the petrified group of the wedding train.

Roland joined them, and with Manna on his right, and Eric at his left, they walked as far as the carriages, and took their seats with the rest.

CHAPTER VI.

SONNENKAMP felt himself slighted by the court, or rather, completely overlooked, but he did not like to show his annoyance, for this lessened his importance; he therefore never failed in his constant show of respect, even though the prince looked at him as if with surprise. It was court service, and he would submit to it.

The day was fixed on which the prince was to leave with his suite. Sonnenkamp joined the party of nobles who paid their last token of respect to him as he drove off, and he also received somewhat of the gracious glance bestowed upon all, and the privy counsellor said to him, just as he was getting into the second carriage: "Your matter stands well, in spite of the very learned and honourable Count Wolfsgarten."

To a large circle, the departure of the court was much the same as when a bride leaves the wedding dance; they go on dancing, indeed they are more merry than ever, but the central point is missing.

Streams of people came, and streams of people left; the lively circle which Bella had formed, daily lost one and another, and Sonnenkamp had frequent occasion to present his parting flowers, although it was really repugnant to him. Bella and Clodwig also prepared for departure.

The last few days were to Eric and Roland a pleasant

gradual cessation, and a refreshing rest after all their noisy doings; and even when Clodwig and Bella left, they minded it but little, for Professor Einsiedel still remained to them.

Sonnenkamp and Frau Ceres, however, were out of humour; they had a feeling of having outlived every one.

Sonnenkamp seemed to himself like an unpurchased nosegay. What is it in the evening? It is watered during the night, and the faded flowers are plucked out next day, and it is taken to market again. Will it have a better fate? It must be tried.

The ladies and gentlemen who in Bella's time had belonged to his intimate circle, now recognised him only distantly, and had joined new-comers. In many of his walks he met also Professor Crutius, who had a good deal of intercourse with the Americans staying there; they often looked at Sonnenkamp. He always bowed very courteously to Crutius, but the latter scarcely returned it.

At length the morning for departure arrived. Sonnenkamp and his retinue drove away in three carriages, but fewer friends were present when they started than they had expected. The carriages were, however, garlanded with flowers, and a crown of flowers decorated the head; indeed, even the spokes of the wheels were twisted round with leaves, and the postillions wore flowers. All this had been arranged by Lutz, that it might have the appearance of having been done by friends.

They breakfasted before starting in the open air, but they did not return to the house, but got into the carriages from the road. Manna sat silently in thought.

had only gone to the baths to accompany her

parents, but no one had experienced a deeper change of feeling than she. Still she would not acknowledge it to herself.

She silently folded her hands and prayed.

They reached the villa. Everything was in good order; the passages of communication between the hot-houses and the stables, a light erection of cast-iron, which Sonnenkamp had planned before his departure, were completed. There was nowhere a trace to be seen that anything new had been built; the head gardener had already trained creepers up the iron pillars. Sonnenkamp expressed his satisfaction.

There was a tone of freshness pervading every mind; they felt a sense of home, not to be experienced during travel. Sonnenkamp asked whether many strangers had been to look over the house and garden during his absence, for he always every year gave permission to his servants, during his own sojourn at the baths, to show the lower floor of the villa, as well as the hot-houses, fruit gardens, and stabling.

The steward informed him that there had never been so many visitors before as in this year, and he had pointed out to each where the prince and princess had sat.

Sonnenkamp asked for the visitors' book, which was kept in the billiard-room, for the large saloon opening into the conservatories had just been transformed into one. He had given strict orders that names alone should be entered.

He read a long list of names, and suddenly he inquired vehemently: "Who has written this?"

No one could give any information. At length the second gardener, the so-called squirrel, said that a gentleman had been there who had once wished to become

Roland's tutor, in company with another gentleman, who was tall and stately, and had spoken with a Westphalian accent; the tall man with the fair hair had written nothing, but the other, who was addressed as Professor, had inserted several names. He remembered it all accurately, because it had struck him even at the time.

Sonnenkamp believed he had found the right clue; the man who had inserted the names could be no other than Professor Crutius. That the people whose names were inserted, and who were the principal leaders of the Slave party of the Southern States, had themselves been there, was inconceivable.

Sonnenkamp walked thoughtfully about, but he could not succeed in banishing it all from his thoughts, though he said half aloud to himself: "My oldest and worst enemy appears again, and it can be nothing else, than my own unhappy and brooding fancy."

Eric had no greater delight in embracing his mother again, than Roland and Manna had.

"You and the Tante are dearer to me," exclaimed Roland, "than the house and everything. Oh, how nice it is that you are here! For then, when we come home, we have friends at home!"

The youth's heart rose with a sense of delight.

Manna was silent, and only said by her looks how she felt the peaceful life of the two ladies. There was something to her almost cloister-like in the repose of the green cottage, and yet the two inmates were free, and not fettered by any outward vow. Gradually she began to talk to them of Professor Einsiedel, and Frau Dournay was delighted as she drew from Manna's words, how thoroughly she had recognised sanctity of

mind in a man of worldly science; for Manna expressed her opinion that the professor possessed true piety.

Sonnenkamp was more thoughtful than ever; his desire for rank seemed to him a state of dependence which he was wantonly imposing on himself. He had brought back from the baths a feeling that he should always be considered a stranger and an intruder in the circle of the nobles, who had behaved with caution to guard against misunderstanding. Of all that had been said in the discussion, the words of the banker rang in his ears; one must be a self-made man, and must remain so.

He stood there like an impenetrable wall. It annoyed him that he should think and worry so much, and yet he could not help it.

He was on the point of begging the privy counsellor to give up the whole matter, when he received a letter from him, telling him that the affair might be considered as happily settled. Sonnenkamp looked round as he read this. Now he had it, and he would cast it from him. That would be still greater, still more satisfying, than to accept it. But, then, what was to become of Frau Ceres, Manna, and Roland? How was he to withdraw?

For a moment the idea passed through his mind that he would sell his whole property and settle in Italy, or Switzerland, or France. But then it occurred to him that he would long to be back again, that he must have a social position and importance, accustomed as he had become to it.

He walked among the trees which he had planted, trained, and nurtured, and felt that he had grown with them; and when his eye wandered towards the Rhine,

he realized something of that magic bond that comes over every one who has once lived near it.

"Forwards!" he exclaimed. "The ball is discharged; it must reach its aim."

He read the letter again, and found that it informed him that the Jewish banker who had solicited elevation to rank at the same time as Sonnenkamp, had singularly enough withdrawn his demand. A vote from Herr Weidmann had yet to be waited for; it would therefore be very good if Sonnenkamp would enter into closer relations with Weidmann, for no one could be certain how the latter might view the affair.

Another point in the letter also afforded Sonnenkamp a subject for thought, for the privy counsellor wrote that Count Wolfsgarten's vote was very strange, but that a remark made by him had decided the matter in Sonnenkamp's favour. The riddles were too much for him, and he determined for a time to do nothing.

The doctor came and passed them all in review. He thought that the baths had done them all good, only that Herr Sonnenkanp was feeling their effects too excitingly.

The doctor had felt their pulses, and had examined them, but the change that had taken place in their minds was beyond his power of vision.

Frau Ceres was weary and bored as usual; she thought it terrible to see and hear again so much of beautiful nature.

Manna could scarcely understand how she had endured such noise and so many restless days.

The sojourn at the baths had, however, produced the most contradictory effects both upon Roland and Eric.

Eric felt that Professor Einsiedel's warning had hit

the mark; he had lost himself in this distracting life, so he now longed to begin a new course of things, and to erect a scientific security against all aggression. He assigned Roland a good deal of solitary work, and often answered his questions evasively, and reproached him for applying to others on many points that he could solve for himself.

Roland felt himself for the first time neglected by Eric, and yet he needed him now more than ever; for the idle life at the baths, the diversion and constant intercourse with others who testified their pleasure in him—all this, now that the first sense of home was over, made him feel a void in his heart and an uneasy longing, until the quiet of the house and the regularity of study became an oppressive burden to him. He longed to be away among men, among companions.

He received a letter from the cadet, telling him that he had got his ensigncy, and would soon come and visit him with some comrades. Roland looked impatiently for diversion and amusement; the words of the tall lieutenant, that he must no longer be dependent on his tutor, took possession of his mind.

In this state of feeling he went to his father and asked if the patent of nobility had not yet come. Sonnenkamp consoled him from day to day, and when he told Roland that Eric also knew of the matter, Roland was surprised. Why then had Eric not said a word to him about it?

Frau Dournay remarked far more than Eric that the sojourn at the baths had wrought a change in Roland. Eric now perceived it also, and again laid aside for some time his scientific work. But he did not seem to succeed in wholly regaining Roland.

An unexpected event was to come to his assistance.

One day the major begged that Herr Sonnenkamp would allow a great Freemason's feast to be held in the nearly-finished knights' hall at the castle; as Herr Weidmann wished that it should be kept there. At the first moment, Sonnenkamp was inclined to accede; it was well just now that Weidmann should come into his vicinity, yet he considered it more fitting to hold back a little, and he asked why Herr Weidmann did not make the request himself.

The major seemed embarrassed: he could not say that he had expressed the same wish, but that Weidmann briefly declined all communication with Sonnenkamp.

Sonnenkamp excused himself from giving an answer at present, but he begged the major to pave the way for a friendly feeling between him and Weidmann.

"I know a way for doing that," said the major. "Herr Weidmann is very desirous that Roland and Herr Dournay should pay him a visit; send them there."

This also Sonnenkamp declined, he thought any act of complaisance towards the rude and reserved Weidmann out of place. When, however, he was out riding on the following day, he almost let go his reins, for he met an open carriage in which Weidmann was sitting beside a man, who at once recalled to Sonnenkamp the hardest struggles of the past. It was Doctor Fritz.

He thought he had made a mistake. He struggled with himself whether he should make himself certain of the fact, but then he would be exhibiting himself to the man, who would be sure to recognize him. In his fury he quickly turned his horse's head and rode past the carriage. Weidmann bowed; his companion seemed startled, he also grasped his hat and raised it, and now he was unmistakable: it was Doctor Fritz, a man of

unusual height and of fresh youthful appearance; the thick waving hair, the high brow, the kindly expression of the blue eye—all this showed the man unmistakably.

Sonnenkamp held in his horse, he felt himself so paralyzed and shattered that he thought he should suddenly fall from it. Yes, that was he! That was his deathly enemy, his most violent adversary! How did he come here? He listened till the sound of wheels had died away, then he turned his horse's head and rode slowly homewards. Had this man met him as a warning that he should desist from his project? Should he hide from him and again be a fugitive in the world, leaving house and garden and park, and all the social links that he had obtained with such labour?

Should he follow the man and beg him for the sake of his children to let the past be forgotten? Should he feign repentance?

Presently he grasped the bridle again tightly, whipped and spurred his steed, and rode to the major.

Fräulein Milch said he was at the castle.

Sonnenkamp rode to the castle. With the utmost indifference he spoke of a visitor who was with Weidmann; the major confirmed it, and said he was a nephew of Weidmann's, Doctor Fritz, who had recently come; he had come to fetch his child who had been brought up at Mattenheim and had been a pupil of Knopf's.

"Was this visitor," asked Sonnenkamp, "at the villa during my absence?"

"Yes, certainly, with Professor Crutius. They were both delighted with the beauty of your house and horticulture. The seeds which I purchased from the gardener, were for Doctor Fritz, who is going to take them with him to America. Send Eric and Roland to Mat-

tenheim, it will be a pleasure for them both to become acquainted with that excellent Doctor Fritz; but it must be done quickly, for I hear he is going away in the next few days."

Fortunately Eric and Roland came just then to the castle, and the major reminded them that they ought to pay Weidmann a visit at Mattenheim. Roland was delighted that some diversion was before him, and Eric hoped that the sight of active life might tend to arouse Roland.

This time Sonnenkamp laid his plans more wisely. Eric had brought out nothing from Clodwig, though he had openly commissioned him to do so; he now gave Eric only hints which seemed indifferent, but which would supply him with all the information which it was important for him to possess. He wanted to know what was passing in the enemy's camp, what Weidmann knew of him, and what Doctor Fritz was going to do.

He inculcated upon Eric that he should tell Herr Weidmann openly that Roland must become a brother Freemason, and that Roland must some day found some great and useful institution in his country.

This, he hoped, would deter his enemies from any opposition to him. Indeed, he begged Eric to say that he was soon going to give up all his possessions to Roland, and that he should himself retire to France. Eric was to send a message on the following day, and then Sonnenkamp would himself go to fetch him from Mattenheim.

On the morning that Eric and Roland set out for Mattenheim, Manna at length resolved to pay a visit to the pastor. Fräulein Perini had openly confessed to her that the pastor was astonished at not having had a

visit from her since her return. Fräulein Perini wished that Manna should learn from herself that she had been to his house, but of course she did not inform her that she had already communicated the whole circumstances of their residence at Karlsbad.

When Manna entered the pastor's house, she was on the point of turning back again, for she heard from the housekeeper that the dean from the capital was on a visit to the priest. The priest had, however, seen her from the window, and he came out and led her by the hand into the room. He introduced her to the dean as a postulant.

Manna did not know the expression, but the dean looked at her, and said he had already heard of her intention to take the veil. Manna cast down her eyes with a frightened and humble look. She heard her praise uttered by the two men, she could not repel it, but her mind felt distracted with opposing thoughts.

The dean inquired whether there had been any high ecclesiastic at the baths.

Manna answered in the negative.

When the priest now asked what other men of distinction she had become acquainted with, Manna felt it her duty to mention Professor Einsiedel first of all.

"The incarnation of shrivelled up self-conceit—the poor little man, who gladly allows himself to be nicknamed an ancient Greek, have you known him ?"

Both men laughed, and Manna looked astonished as she saw the professor she had so reverenced transformed into a most ridiculous caricature. She did not feel powerful enough to defend him here, so she was silent.

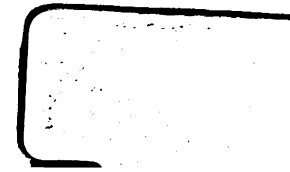
"We will accompany you home," said the pastor at length; "you, my honoured colleague, must see the beautiful villa."

Accompanied by the two ecclesiastics, Manna went to her parents' house; she felt like a captured criminal, and yet both men were extremely polite and intimate.

In the court-yard they met Sonnenkamp. He was very gracious and reverential, and took pleasure in showing the reverend men the park, fruit-gardens, hot-houses, and lastly, the villa. The dean evidenced an acute appreciation of everything, and when Sonnenkamp pointed out to him with a certain pride that every fire-place had its special chimney, he suddenly observed that the dean exchanged a quick glance with the priest and smiled.

So that is what you are thinking of? flashed across Sonnenkamp's mind. You come and look at the villa in order even now to arrange how this house can be transformed into a convent, if Manna carries out her intention? I would rather burn the house down and all that is in it!

The two ecclesiastics did not understand why such an altered triumphant expression came over Sonnenkamp's face; he was happy in being able to see through the deceit of others. He accompanied the men to the garden-gate and begged them often to visit him in his modest dwelling.

END OF VOL. II.

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